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FEBRUARY 2005

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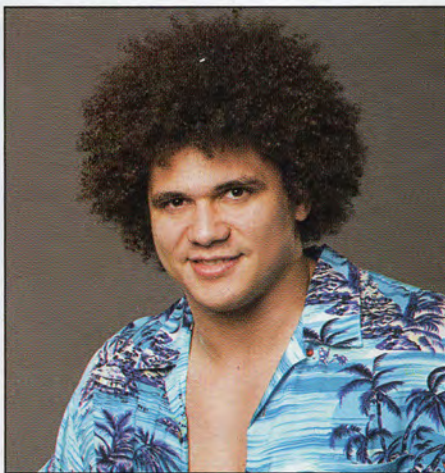
Live Events & Superstars' Birthdays

2005

FEBRUARY

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|--|--|--|----|----|----|--|
| | | 1 San Jose, CA <i>SmackDown!</i> 7:30 p.m. | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Saitama, Japan <i>SmackDown!</i> |
| 6 | 7 | 8 BIG SHOW | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 VISCERA | 15 Cleveland, OH <i>SmackDown!</i> 7:30 p.m. | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 Pittsburgh, PA <i>No Way Out</i> 7:45 p.m. | 21 Baltimore, MD 7:00 p.m. CARLITO | 22 Philadelphia, PA <i>SmackDown!</i> 7:30 p.m. | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 Auburn Hills, MI 7:30 p.m. |
| 27 Columbus, OH 7:00 p.m. | 28 Danbury, CT 7:00 p.m. | | | | | |

* All event dates and times subject to change.



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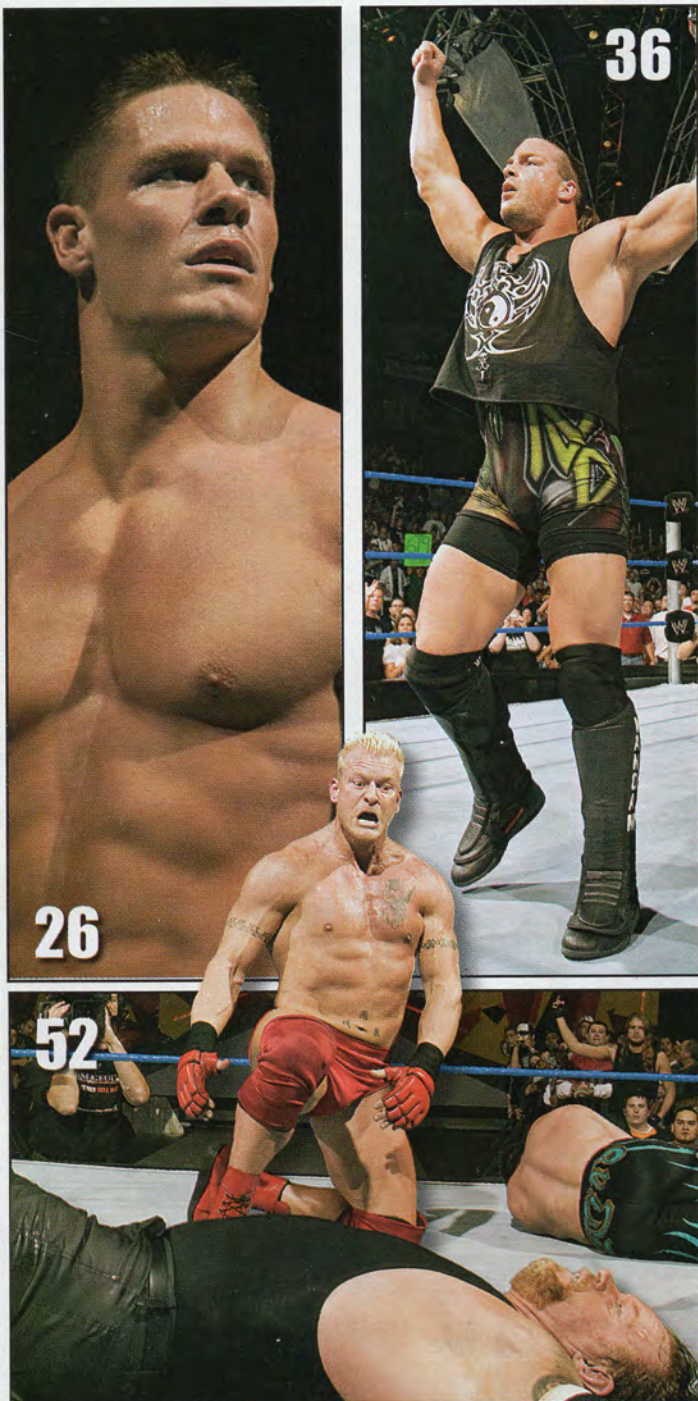
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Cover Photo by Rich Freeda

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Happy Holidays

Dear Editor,

The Holiday 2004 issue of *SmackDown! Magazine* was a work of art. Miss Jackie, Dawn Marie and Torrie Wilson are the hottest little helpers Santa has ever had, and the feature on Undertaker was a great read. The thing I enjoyed most from the magazine, however, was "The Richest Prize in the Game: The Fabled History of the WWE Championship" by Keith Elliot Greenberg. Wow, that feature did a wonderful job of following the history of the coveted WWE Championship, and was a testament to the legacy that each great performer who has held the title has left. Great work, Mr. Greenberg!

Trevor Sherman
London, KY

'Taker Testimonial

Dear Editor,

I am a huge WWE fan and I get *SmackDown! Magazine* just for Undertaker. I was so glad to see the write-up on Undertaker in the Holiday issue. He's shed his blood, sweat and tears for over 14 years, and it's good to know that WWE recognizes that. He is the Phenom and nobody will ever replace him. I will always love and worship him, for he is the one and only Deadman.

Stephanie Mossow
Massena, NY

Heidenreich's No. 1 Fan

Dear Editor,

It was stated in the "Lowdown" column of the Holiday issue that Heidenreich's verses are "maniacal verses on crumpled pieces of paper." This, coming from someone who is a poet himself, I find to be false. Have you ever read the true meaning behind the word "poetry" in a dictionary? It does not state that there are any boundaries with the considerations of such an art. A painter can stroke what Heidenreich expresses in his lines and any human being can praise that as long as it is accurate in imagery. But when it is written, people judge the writer because they do not listen to the poem, but the person who wrote and criticize it as madness. Is it really madness to feel pain and hate? If so, I don't think there would be a WWE. I admit that I did not like Heidenreich when he first debuted.

But when he took Michael Cole to the back of the arena and read him a poem, I listened with complete awareness. I was impressed with his words and how he managed to keep himself from breaking down afterward. It was a serious vision of pure pain and hatred. Then he read one to Mr. McMahon and it seemed to be of total disapproval of the outside world of judgment. The man is only human—a human who claims that his heart was destroyed and that the only way to fix it is by writing it in pieces on notepads. Poetry has been my best counselor. Why do you think Heidenreich loves his poetry more than anything?

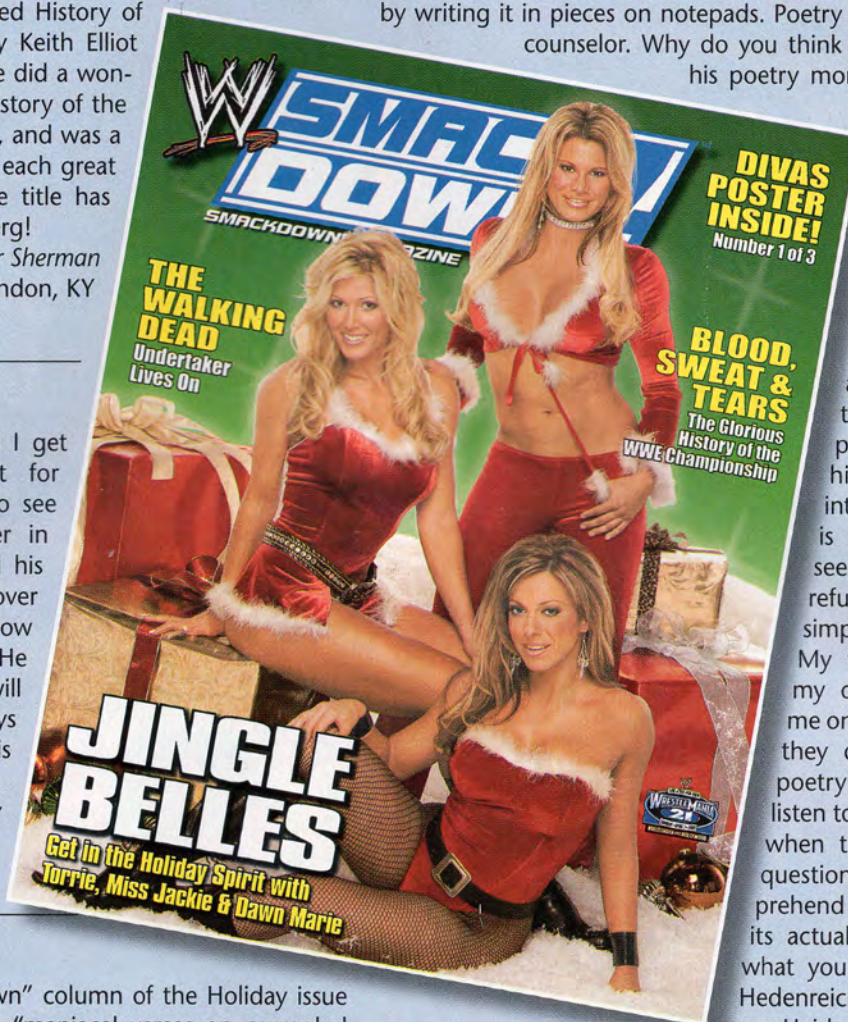
Because it's really all he has.

Every poet is serious about their work. Shakespearesure was. I have some advice for you: why don't you ask Heidenreich to read you his poetry and watch his eyes traverse into ecstasy that he is being heard. I've seen it. Why do you refuse? Because you simply don't want to. My friends and even my own family judge me on my work because they don't know what poetry is. They do not listen to it personally, and when they do, they ask questions that totally comprehend the poem and not its actual being. Which is what you have plotted on Heidenreich's words. I say to you Heidenreich, keep writing,

because it is your true serenity. Also, work toward writing a book of poetry. Anger is one the most beautiful things to cull words from. Also *SmackDown! Magazine*, next time you criticize Heidenreich's words, get a poet to do it for you. I guarantee that he/she would have total opposite oppression [sic] of Heidenreich's lines than your own if you actually wrote one. Try writing a poem yourself, and see what I mean.

Matthew Laramore
Via E-mail

[Editor's Note: Waiter, check please.]



Golden Rule: Don't Mess with Jesus

It seems that in all the fanfare surrounding the historic *SmackDown!* debut of Carlito Caribbean Cool in October, a lot of people may have overlooked yet another promising *SmackDown!* prospect. That was their mistake, and some of those people may soon pay for it.

The man is Jesus. Previously just the bodyguard for Carlito, there are some enlightened individuals within the industry who believe that he has a lot more to offer than that. In the coming weeks and months, we just might be seeing some of that potential.

Heck, we've already seen it. Just ask John Cena. When the Doctor of Thuganomics made his triumphant return to *SmackDown!* in November, who was it that put him on a stretcher, leaving his career largely in doubt? It wasn't Carlito. It was Jesus.

Attacking like a deadly viper, Jesus knew just where to strike and when to strike. He took advantage of the new United States Champion when he was vulnerable and ruined his moment of celebration. Carlito may be in charge of the operation, but Jesus is undeniably the muscle.

And now, with Carlito temporarily out of the picture, could it be time for Jesus to reveal just how important a role he has played in his boss' dramatic overnight success? Like Diesel did a decade ago when his former boss, Shawn Michaels, took a little sabbatical from WWE competition, might Jesus be about to step up and shine?

At first, Carlito stood alone. But after

just a week or two of WWE action, he found that he had attracted so much animosity among the other Superstars that he needed backup. He needed an enforcer, someone to watch his back and do his dirty work. Heading back home to the Caribbean, he used all his connections to come up with the most feared, the most no-nonsense, the most reliable individual he could find. Invariably, everyone he went to for help pointed to the same man.

Ironically enough, ever since that fateful night in November, it seems that John Cena may have just as much—if not more—to

fear from Jesus as he does from Carlito himself. Carlito took his championship away. But Jesus saw to it that Cena would be unable to get it back.

Clearly, this is just the beginning. Poised to make an impact on *SmackDown!* in his own right, Jesus has only given us a fleeting glimpse of what he is not only capable of doing, but willing to do.

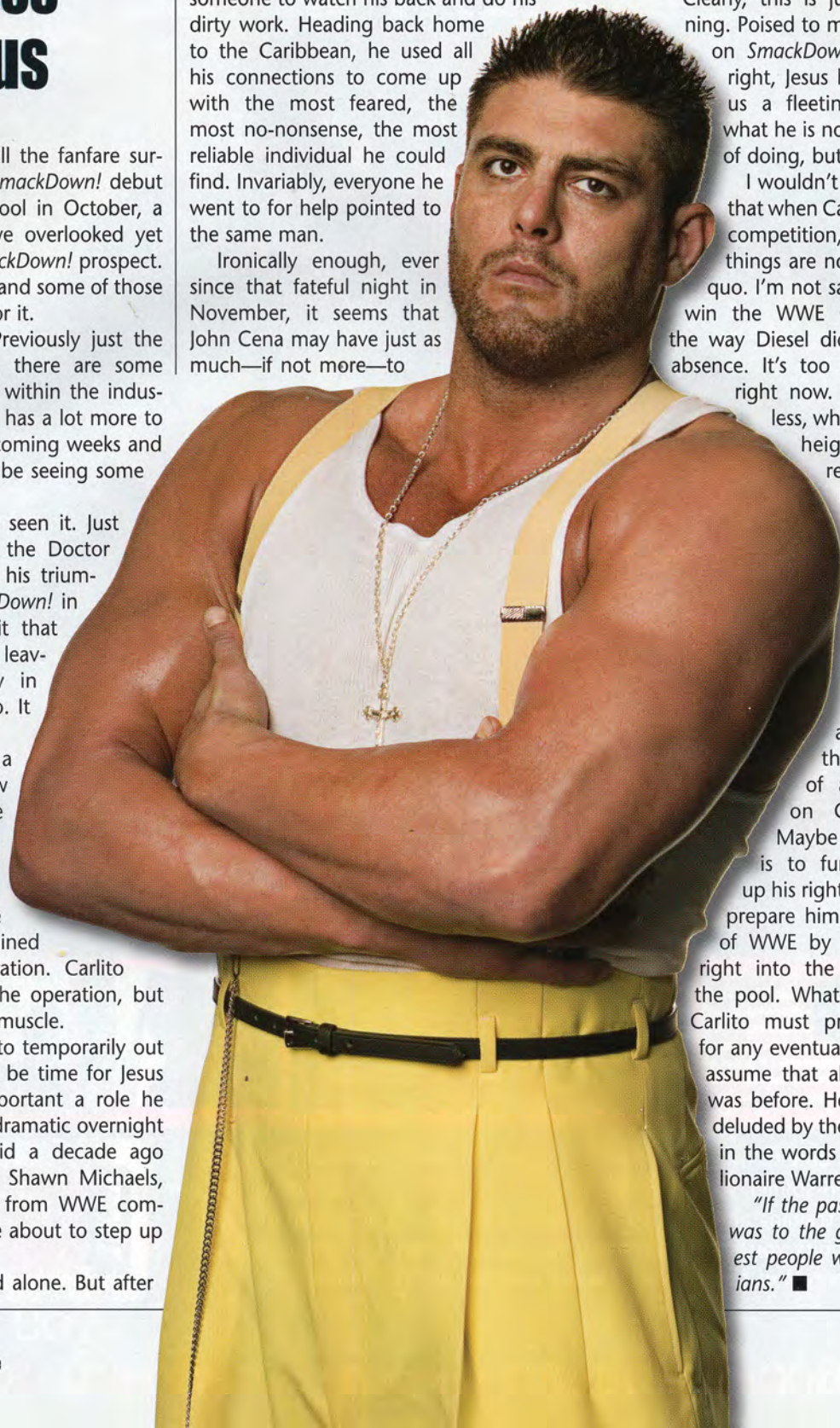
I wouldn't be surprised if that when Carlito returns to competition, he finds that things are no longer status quo. I'm not saying Jesus will win the WWE Championship the way Diesel did in Michaels' absence. It's too early for that right now. But neverthe-

less, who's to say what heights he may reach when set loose the way he has been?

The man with the apples may not be entirely happy with what he finds.

Then again, maybe this is all part of a grand plan on Carlito's part. Maybe his intention is to further toughen up his right-hand man, to prepare him for the rigors of WWE by throwing him right into the deep end of the pool. Whatever the case, Carlito must prepare himself for any eventuality. He cannot assume that all will be as it was before. He must not be deluded by the past. Because in the words of famous billionaire Warren Buffett:

"If the past was all there was to the game, the richest people would be librarians." ■



ASK THE SUPERSTARS

Got a Question?

You, the readers, have the chance to pick the brains of the *SmackDown!* Superstars on any subject you like!

Mail your questions to: *SmackDown! Magazine* • c/o World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. • 1241 E. Main Street • Stamford, CT 06902

Or e-mail your questions to: sdmag@wwe.com • With the subject line: "Ask the Superstars"

• **Who would you like to have as general manager? (Dodgerfan025)**

"I'd pick myself." – **René Duprée**

• **What do you read when you are traveling? (NHstigers24)**

"Every day, I'll read USA Today and The Wall Street Journal, and, once a week, I'll read The Economist, or Baron's." – **John "Bradshaw" Layfield**

• **Are you terrified or scared of anything? (Laura Cullen)**

"Spiders. In fact, I had one in my hotel room this morning. It was on one of my shirts and scared the living heck out of me. I jumped. So yes, I'm terrified of spiders." – **Rey Mysterio**

• **If you could be another WWE Superstar, who would it be? (William Lowe)**

"From SmackDown!, Torrie Wilson, because she's pretty, and from Raw, Ric Flair, because he's my favorite." – **Funaki**

• **If WWE had a Raw vs. SmackDown! pay-per-view in the near future, who would you like to face from Raw, and why? (Robert Zeliff)**

"I would definitely say Christian, because I liked the last match I had with him. It was a Ladder Match, and it kicked much ass." – **Rob Van Dam**

• **What is the craziest thing you have ever done? (Lorin Gremaux)**

"I've done a lot of crazy things. One time when I was playing football in the CFL, I got so mad at one of the defensive linemen—he was talking all kinds of trash like all defensive linemen do—that I ran off the field, grabbed a pair of scissors, and tried to stab him. The police had to run on the field and arrest me during the game." – **Heidenreich**

• **Why did you become JBL's Chief of Staff? (Dennis Santiago & Kurt Miller)**

"In order to be the very best in WWE, you have to surround yourself with the best people. John "Bradshaw" Layfield is the best in WWE. I have goals, I have aspirations, and this is how I am going to accomplish them. One day, I want to be the WWE Champion, so by learning all that I can from JBL, one day I will be able to follow in his footsteps." – **Orlando Jordan**

• **What was your first job before you became a WWE Superstar? (Devin Monahan)**

"I was a cashier, then a cook at the McDonald's in Nanuet, New York. I was 16 years old at the time, and made minimum wage, which was \$4.10." – **Nunzio**

• **Who is your favorite athlete outside wrestling? (Scotts2Hott316)**

"Michael Vick, quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons — I like him." – **Theodore Long**

• **What's your favorite movie? (Jeris Abuhouran)**

"Black Hawk Down, Pulp Fiction, and the Godfather trilogy." – **Undertaker**

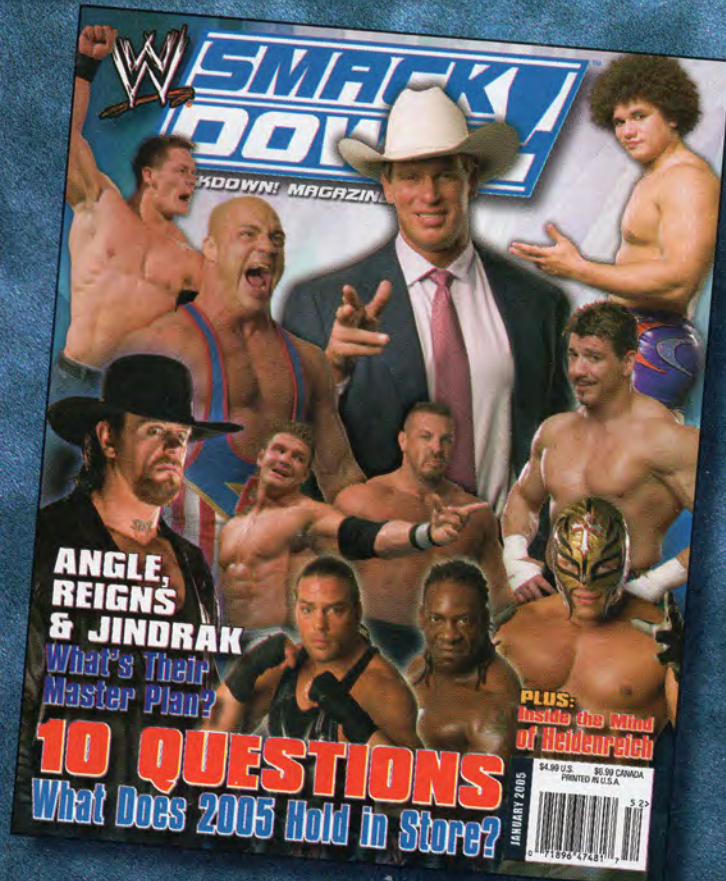
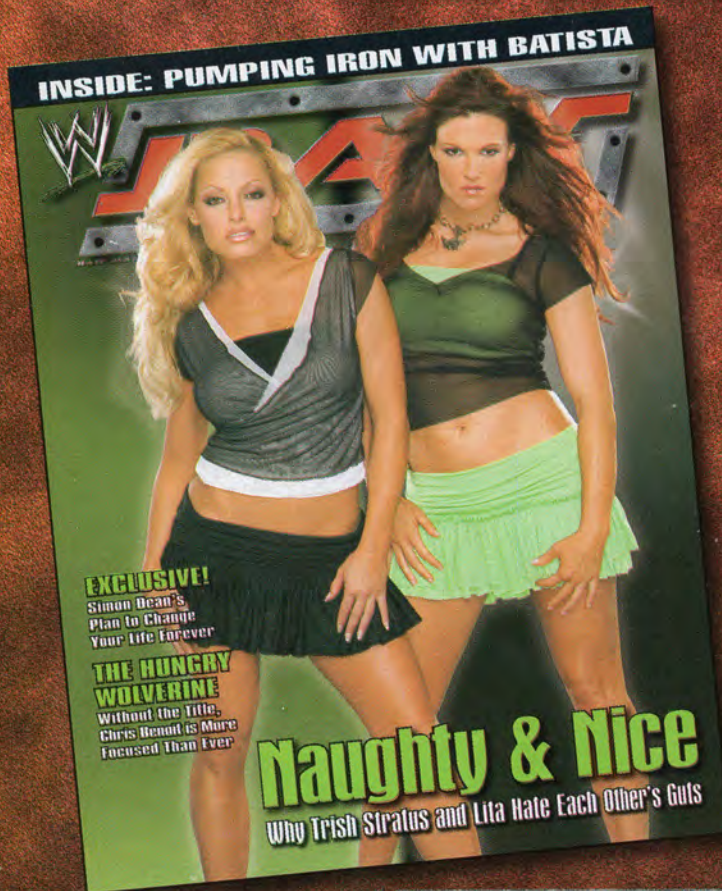
• **What is the most painful move you've been put in, and who put you in it? (Jim Anderson)**

"I'd have to say the Fujiwara armbar, by Chris Benoit." – **Eddie Guerrero**



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CHRISTMAS IN

New York Fire Department Capt. David Clingain was caught in the area between the World Trade Center towers when they came down, bombarding him with fiery rubble. His eyes blinded by dust, Clingain struggled to survive—and save the lives of his brother firefighters. When he finally reached safety, he discovered the horrible truth—343 of his comrades were dead.

And when his Army Reserve unit was called to war, Clingain went willfully, joining 138,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. “There’s a lot of violence,” the 34-year-old Reserve sergeant said, “but we’ve done a lot of good. We’ve built schools for people, given them a sense of well-being.”

Nonetheless, the holidays were a lonely time for the men and women at war. Clingain missed his family in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn, N.Y., particularly his 6-year-old son, Brendan, who’d periodically accompany his father to see WWE at Madison Square Garden.

Now, on a chilly afternoon outside of Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit, Clingain looked across a bombed-out soccer stadium and took in a surreal sight: the *SmackDown!* Superstars competing for the troops in Iraq.

“It’s something I never expected,” he said.

As René Duprée and Booker T competed in the ring, Clingain imagined Brendan home in New York, turning on *SmackDown!*’s second Christmas special from the war-torn nation. “People hear these horror stories about Iraq,” he said. “It’s a good morale booster for the families to see the troops enjoying themselves.”

The show was the culmination of a short, intense tour that saw Superstars like JBL, Undertaker, Heidenreich, Mick Foley, Eddie Guerrero, Rey Mysterio, Big Show, Charlie Haas, Kurt Angle, Luther Reigns, Hardcore Holly, Kenzo Suzuki, Torrie Wilson, Miss Jackie and Dawn Marie—along with Vince McMahon—visit a total of 12 bases around the country, mingling with all those men and women who wouldn’t be home for the holidays.

“For these troops, WWE was their Christmas,” Art Myers, director of Armed Forces Services said. “It reinforces how much America—and WWE—cares about them.”



IRAQ II

WWE Pays Tribute to the Troops One More Time

By Keith Elliot
Greenberg





The WWE group started their journey in Nashville, where, after a *SmackDown!* taping, they boarded a bus to Berry Field, an Air National Guard base, then boarded onto a mammoth C-17, capable of holding 64,000 pounds of cargo. Generally, that cargo includes jeeps, tanks, humvees and helicopters. In this case, there were 60 passenger seats on the aircraft, as well as television and lighting equipment, and a ring.

Booker T attempted to ingratiate himself to one of the group's military hosts, extending his hand and declaring, "I'm Booker T. Five-time WCW champion."

"And I'm Sergio Rios," the man replied proudly, "Captain in the United States Air Force."

Built into the ceiling were two boxes equipped to fire flares if the plane came under attack. Each Superstar was given a Kevlar flak jacket and helmet, and warned

about what he or she might encounter on the ground in Iraq.

"If you hear a mortar siren," said Marine Captain Jason Anderson, "put on your Kevlar and flak and get down into a solid building (there are concrete SCUD shelters on every base visited by the Superstars). You *will* hear mortar sirens. I guarantee it."

Upon touching down at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Balad, north of Baghdad, the crew was met with elation. Senior Airman Brandon Adams, 22, of Roswell, New Mexico, for instance, didn't know about his *SmackDown!* guests until he came on shift that evening.

"I grabbed my camera," he said, while unloading the C-17. "The first person I saw was Undertaker, standing up and getting out of his seat. I looked



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NICKELODEON



around, and there was Big Show, Vince McMahon and Torrie Wilson. It was a nice sight."

FOB Balad is situated in the Sunni Triangle, one of the most dangerous regions in the country. On September 11, 2004—three years to the day after the World Trade Center tragedy—a U.S. airman was hit by mortar fire from just outside the base, losing both legs and an arm.

The Superstars' stay at the base was brief—there was so much of the country to cover. After a few hours rest, the crew divided up. Torrie Wilson met with a group of Iraqi National Guard trainees, who greeted the stunning Diva by tossing her into the air. Big Show, Mick Foley and Charlie Haas were among those invited onto Black Hawk helicopters, from which servicemen tossed bags of candy toward the outstretched arms of local children.

While some soldiers were frustrated that their deployment lingered longer than originally anticipated, and saddened by the deaths of more than 1,300 of their compatriots, morale seemed far higher than reported in the States. Instead of vengeance toward the insurgents, the common sentiment was an eagerness to provide Iraqis with clean drinking water, shoes and medicine.

"I believe in what we're doing here," said Army Sgt. Charles Nelson of Portsmouth, Ohio. "We're bettering people's lives—from the younger generation up."

Rey Mysterio was astonished to encounter soldiers who'd made replicas of his masks—and chronicled his entire career from its beginnings on the San Diego-Tijuana border.

"I never would have met these people in my life if I hadn't come here," he said. "Now, they're going to keep this experience in their hearts and minds. And I'm blessed to have shaken their hands and spoken to them."

At FOB Paliwoda, Foley, Big Show and Haas were eating in the mess hall when the base came under rocket attack. "It made you think, 'Wow, this is for real,'" Haas said.

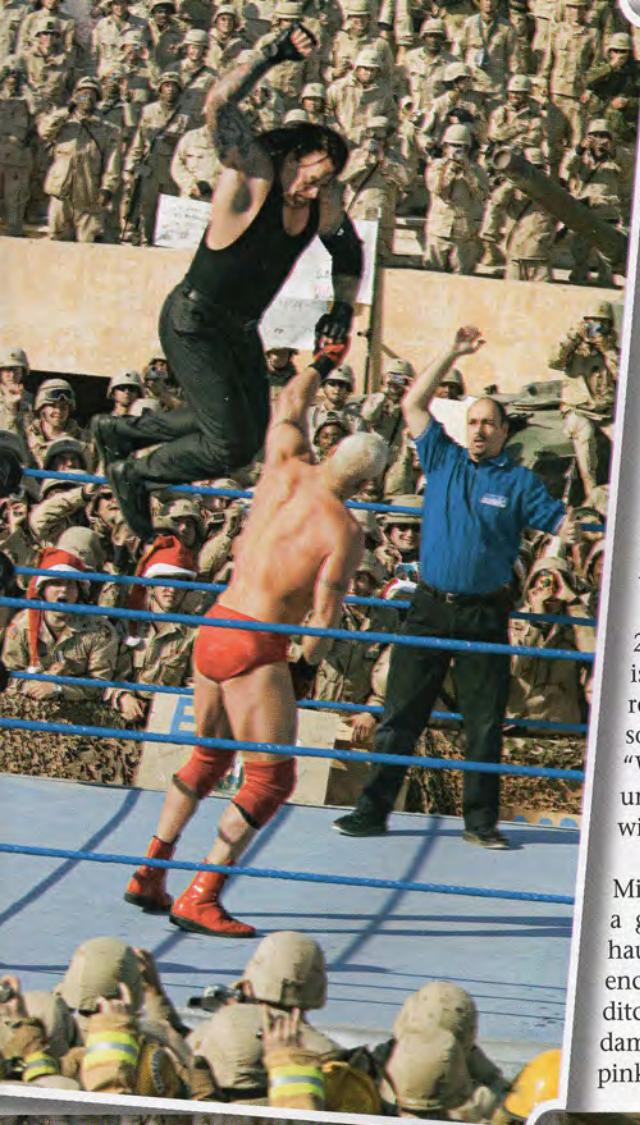
He and Foley grabbed their helmets and flak jackets and sought cover until the mortar barrage ended. "And through it all," Foley said, "Big Show continued to eat his corn pops."

Hardcore Holly was allowed to sit in on a planning meeting, and gained a new perception of the military brain trust. "Everything was detailed, mapped out, precise," he said. "They know where the bad guy is. There is so much more good here than bad."

The site of the *SmackDown!* show, FOB Speicher—named for Scott Speicher, a Navy pilot downed in the 1991 Persian Gulf War—was once Al-Shakur, an Iraqi Air Base under the regime of Saddam Hussein. It is alleged that the dictator's son, Uday, ordered his country's athletes tortured in the base's soccer stadium after they lost in international competition.

WWE staged its show there without conducting a site survey. The production team would arrive, it was decided, and deal with whatever was there. After all, it





wouldn't be the TitanTron, pyro or lighting rigs that would make this show memorable. It would be the troops in the audience.

The Superstars flew into Speicher on a C-130 that periodically dipped and banked from side to side—an evasive maneuver in case anyone attempted to blast the plane out of the air.

Once at the base, the performers mingled with the troops. They learned the day-to-day details of the war from the soldiers fighting it.

Army Spc. Lucas Balzum, 21, of Moorehead, Minnesota, is a "trailblazer," clearing the roads for bombs. "We've had some pretty bad blasts," he said. "We've lost five people in our unit. One guy had two kids and a wife. It's pretty hard to see."

Sgt. June Frost, 42, of Mio, Michigan, a mother of three and a grandmother, was in a convoy hauling fuel, on June 26, when she encountered a bomb in a drainage ditch. The ensuing explosion did damage to her arm and broke her pinkie.



"Usually, when you get hit like that, you get an ambush afterwards," she said. "So we wanted to get away. We drove another five miles before our flat tire and radiator gave out. It was scary going out on the road the next time—but we have to do our job,"

Booker T somberly listened to the various tales. "This is one of the greatest moments of my life, and of my career," he said. "It means more than winning any title. This has given me a whole new sense of how precious life really is."

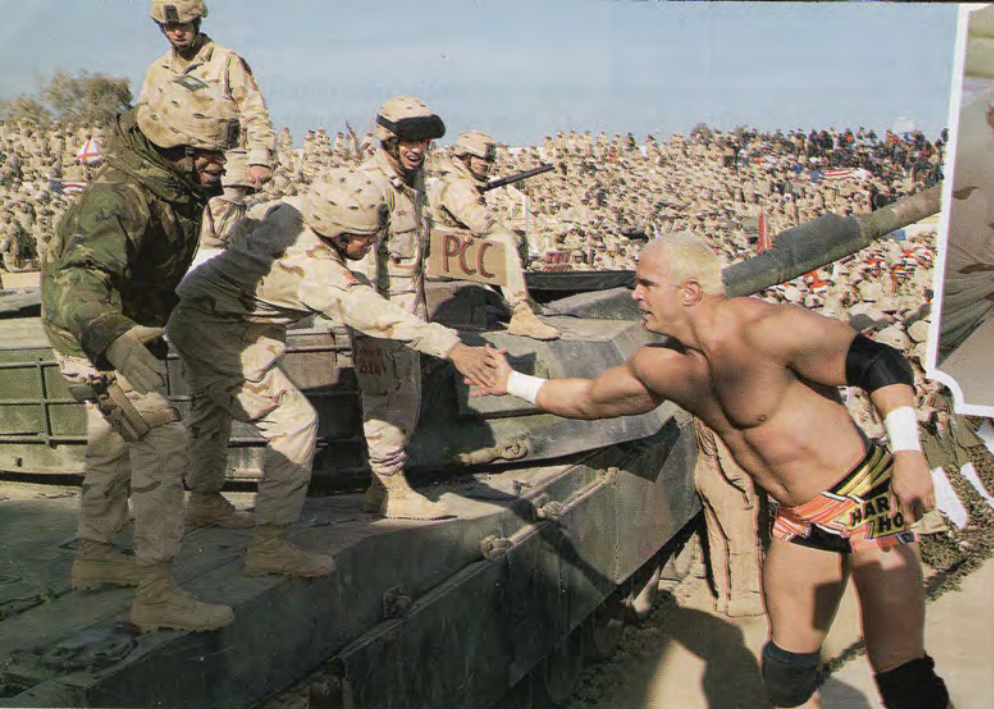
Some 24 hours before the show, the production team—and an impromptu ring crew consisting of some 50 military volunteers—unfurled a giant American flag and hung it over the battle-scarred soccer stadium, which obscured the podium where Uday was said to have once sat. A cargo carrier was displayed on the pitch, along with a surface-to-air missile, heavy equipment truck and an Apache helicopter.

From the beginning, the WWE team understood that staging a show in Iraq entailed certain risks. Should a rocket attack occur during the matches, the Superstars were told, everyone would retreat to a shelter. Once the assault ended, the spectacular would resume.

"The troops are counting on us to put on a good show," Holly said. "And I'm not going to be the one to let them down. Neither will anyone else."

By everyone's admission, the 3,500-plus troops in the audience upstaged the Superstars in the ring. Still, it was an enjoyable afternoon of *SmackDown!* action. Booker T took on Duprée, Undertaker tangled with Heidenreich, Holly battled Suzuki, JBL defended his WWE Championship against Big Show, and, in the main event, Mysterio & Guerrero challenged Angle & Reigns. Mick Foley played Santa Claus for Torrie, Jackie, Lilian Garcia and Dawn Marie—bestowing the latter with an empty bottle of Gatorade because she'd been "very naughty."

In the crowd, Staff Sgt. Bob Foye, 44, of Lane, Kansas, spoke about watching Harley Race defend his NWA Championship at Memorial Hall in Kansas City, Kansas. While training at Fort Riley, he and a contingent of WWE



fans would regularly clash with a clique of *Monday Night Football* aficionados. "We demanded to watch *Raw*," he said with a laugh. "At least today, there isn't any conflict. Everybody here loves WWE. Damn skippy!"

Of all the competitors, JBL was perhaps the most entertaining. He wore shiny, protective gear in the ring, motioned at Big Show and declared, "There's your weapon of mass destruction."

Addressing Islamic prohibitions

against alcohol consumption, the WWE Champion told the troops, "Next time, you want to start a war with a guy in a place where they serve cold beer... You might as well call this place Rehabistan."

Originally, it was JBL's idea for WWE to broadcast a show from the Middle East in 2003. And, this year, after the rest of the *SmackDown!* representatives returned to the U.S., JBL moved on to Afghanistan, where he met with some of the 18,000

Americans fighting there.

"The hard-working American soldier—it's very impressive," he said. "I'm here to tell these troops, 'Thank you.'"

When the cameras went off, the Superstars and the troops still could not pry themselves away from each other. Undertaker signed thousands of autographs, even after military brass told him that it was OK to leave. Vince McMahon asked soldiers about the hardships of being away from their families. Kurt Angle posed for photos. Big Show told jokes.

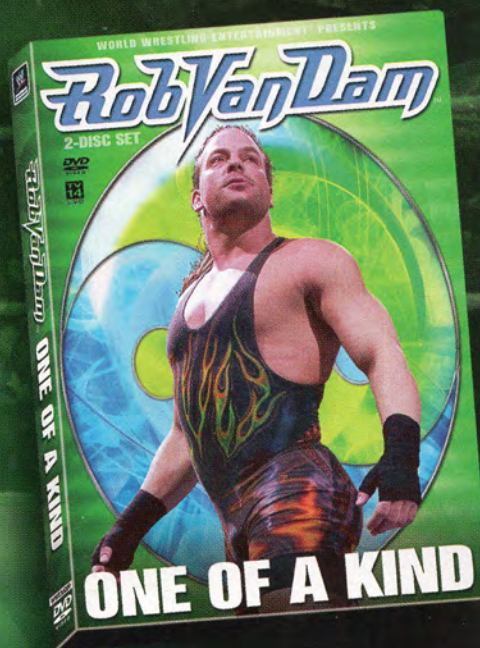
"This was better than last year," Show said. "We got to go to more bases, meet more of the troops. You look at these young people, you see their heart and their drive, and it makes you proud to be an American." ■



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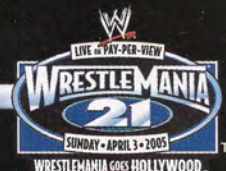


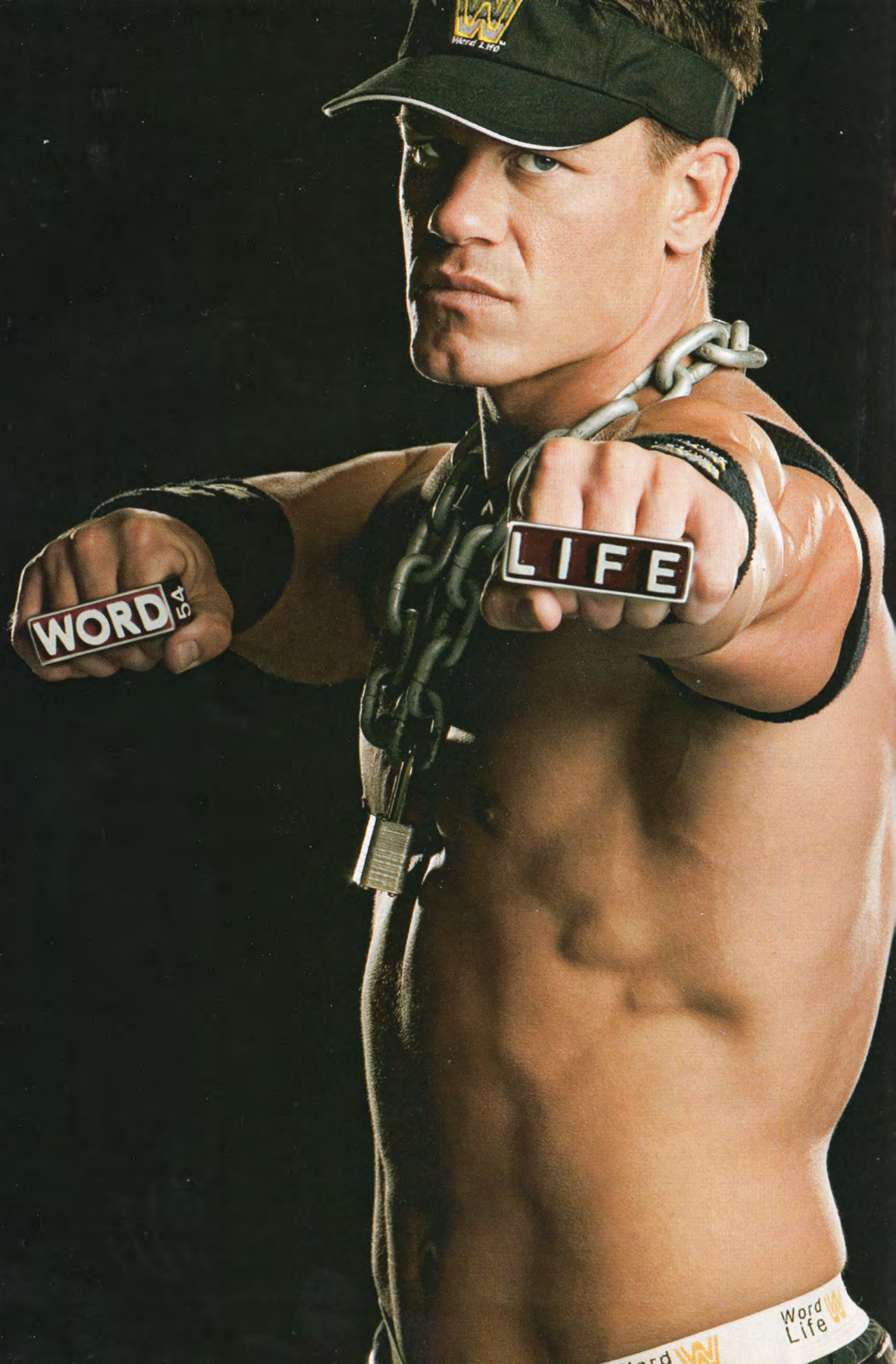
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THE DOCTOR IS IN

No Mistake About It, Cena's In Demand

By Brian Solomon

John Cena is a very busy man these days.

At one time, the only thing he had to worry about was the next man to set his sights on in pursuit of ring glory. Working for WWE was a lifelong dream for the West Newbury, Massachusetts native, one that he achieved in 2002 when he first broke into the big time.

Back then, Cena could never in his wildest dreams imagine the road life would take him on in less than 24 months. He simply focused on the matter at hand, and went about the business of becoming the hottest Superstar *SmackDown!* had to offer.

And although the road was rocky in the beginning, it was only a matter of time before John Cena finally found his voice.

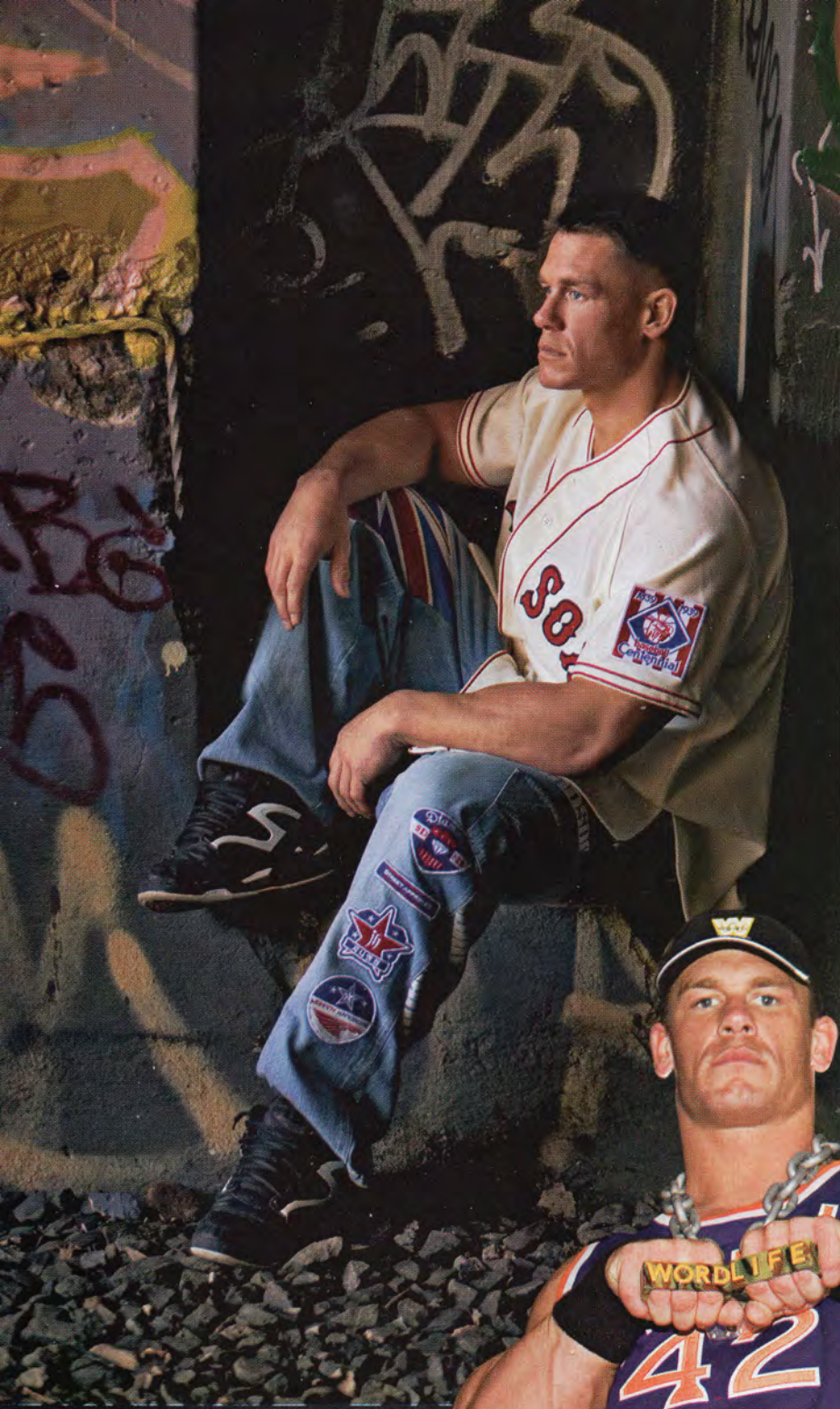
And when we say "found his voice," we mean that in the most literal of ways. For it wasn't until Cena let his true self shine through that sports-entertainment superstardom became his.

The second Cena got his hands on a mic and started spittin' his lyrics straight from the heart, a star was born. No longer was he just another face in the crowd. The man had attitude to spare, and what he boasted about in his raps, he was more than

capable of backing up in the ring. The Doctor of Thuganomics was in.

Don't blame yourself if you didn't take him seriously at first. Admittedly it was not easy to wrap one's brain around the image of someone looking the way Cena does displaying the kind of vicious lyrical mastery he does. But before long, John had all the doubters eating crow. To steal a catchphrase from a certain *Raw* Superstar, John Cena was for real.

He main-evented his first pay-per-view at *Backlash '03*, mere months into his tenure as a WWE Superstar. And although he was unsuccessful in wresting the WWE Championship



With a charisma machine like Cena, it was only a matter of time before the entertainment industry would come calling.

from the grip of Brock Lesnar, he proved something that night. He proved that he was worthy of hanging with the best the sport has to offer.

In a dramatically short period of time, John Cena was becoming one of WWE's most talked-about competitors. His demeanor, his abilities, and his style struck a chord with fans in a way that cannot be planned, pre-packaged or bottled. Just as The Rock did in the previous decade, so did Cena develop naturally into a grassroots phenomenon. It simply happened, and the more time went by, the harder it became to ignore.

Maybe it was the throwbacks. The chain. The brass knuckles. The pump sneakers. The "You Can't See Me." Whatever it was, Cena had it and used it to become the story of 2003.

Nevertheless, the adoration of the masses remained the only accolade Cena could claim for some time. After a while, he gained a reputation as the hottest WWE Superstar who had yet to win a championship. That all changed at *WrestleMania XX*.

In the hallowed halls of Madison Square Garden, on the night of the 20th edition of WWE's greatest extravaganza, John Cena toppled the mighty Big Show to capture the United States Championship. The champ was officially here.

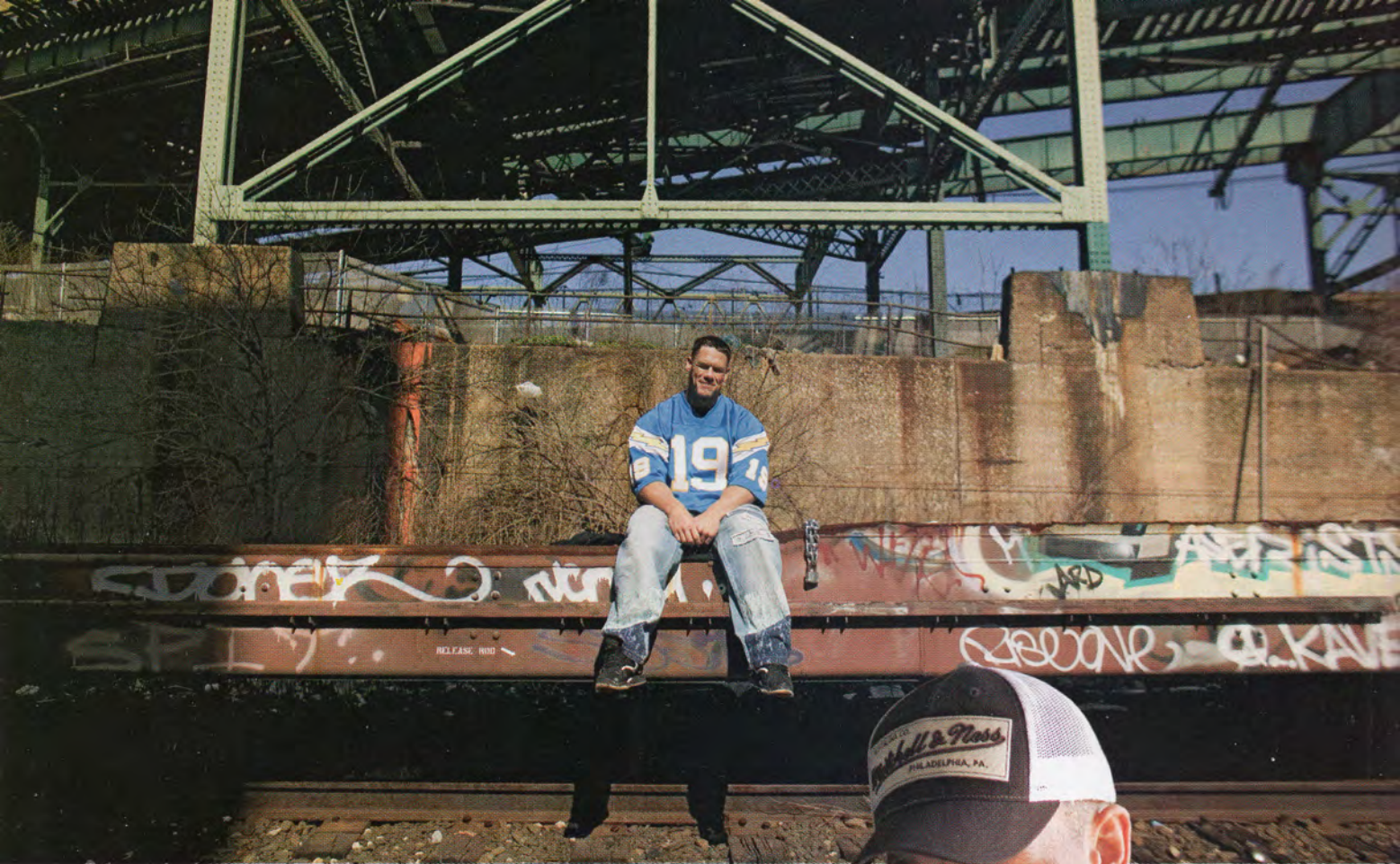
Now he had a title. If he wasn't legit before, there was no denying that he was fully legit now. And for months he defended it with pride, as the world more and more came to know his name.

During that initial United States Championship reign, Cena became one of *SmackDown!*'s top Superstars—

or more properly, one of WWE's top Superstars.

With so much attention on a charisma machine like Cena, it was only a matter of time before the entertainment industry would come calling. But we'll get to that in a minute.

After months of grueling defenses, including most memorably a classic series against Booker T that culminated at *No Mercy*, Cena suffered an unfortunate setback. He lost to cocky newcomer Carlito in the



second-generation Superstar's WWE debut. Just as Cena himself had done by giving Kurt Angle a run for his money in his own debut match back in 2002, so Carlito had now done to the man who was no longer a rookie.

What was worse than losing his title that night was what happened later in the evening. At an after-hours club, Cena was stabbed in an incident whose bizarre and shady circumstances are still being unraveled. At no point could anyone have imagined that someone who'd risen so far could suffer such a disastrous series of setbacks. Yet we should have known that for someone with as much momentum as Cena, it would take a hell of a lot more than that to derail him.

What most fans didn't realize at the time was that there was already a lot more going on in his life than what they were seeing each week in the ring. Aside from his wrestling career, Cena had plans to break out in the both the movie and music industries. Things were becoming a whole lot more interesting.

The CD was a labor of love from the beginning. In fact, he had been working on it with every free minute he got from being on the road since 2003. It started out as his own pet project, but it didn't stay that way for long. When music executives got wind of the project, a bidding war



If you think he tears the house down when he raps in the ring, then you ain't heard nothin' yet.

ensued and Cena was soon signed to a deal. Working with hip-hop legend Freddie Foxxx, Cena got to work putting together something he and his fans could be proud of.

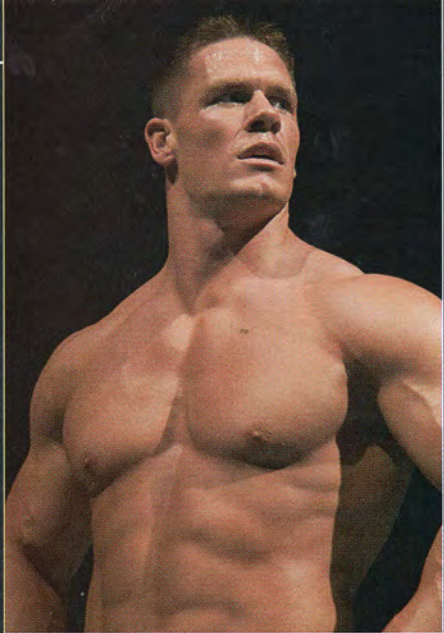
Entitled, appropriately enough, *You Can't See Me*, the debut CD of WWE's microphone master is scheduled to hit record stores in April. John's recent injury, as well as the constant duties associated with being a WWE Superstar, have delayed the release for some time now, but it looks like the moment may soon be at hand when fans get to experience the full fury of Cena's skills. If you think he tears the house down when he raps in the ring, then you ain't heard nothin' yet.

Yet the demand for Cena's skills didn't end there. Impressed with the natural way he carried himself and the seemingly magnetic influence he seems to have over audiences, WWE officials chose Cena for the starring role in the first theatrical release planned for WWE Films.

Once his injuries were fully healed, John began work on the movie which currently is filming under the working title *The Marine*, an action-adventure flick that is sure to capitalize on all the young Superstar's strengths and make people everywhere aware of what WWE fans have known for the past two years. Like The Rock and Triple H before him, Cena is on the verge of breaking out to a much larger audience. Expected to release some time in late 2005, expect the movie to be just the vehicle that propels Cena to the next level.

Between wrestling, recording and acting, the many talents of John Cena have been in major demand these days. Yet just because he's got so much on his plate, don't think that means that sports-entertainment has taken a back-seat. On the contrary, Cena has always maintained that WWE always has been and always will be his first love. Time and time again in interviews, Cena





**It seems that there
truly is nothing in
the world that can stop
John Cena.**

has made it a point to silence the naysayers who claim he only got into sports-entertainment to further a music career. Anyone who knows the passion Cena has for WWE could immediately tell you what a ridiculous claim that is.

First and foremost, John Cena will always be about kicking ass and taking names in a WWE ring, winning titles and entertaining fans on the mic as only he can. Any further success outside the ring, far from being premeditated on his part, is simply the natural result of such a remarkably talented individual putting himself out there in the public forum. Certain things are just inevitable.

Just to prove that he was still all about getting it done between the ropes, somehow, some way, in the midst of everything he had going on, Cena found a way not only to return to WWE competition, but to reclaim the championship that had proven his legitimacy in the first place. He took the title back from Carlito the moment he returned, and violently turned back the challenge of Carlito's bodyguard Jesus—the very man who had allegedly stabbed him in that after-hours club, nearly causing all

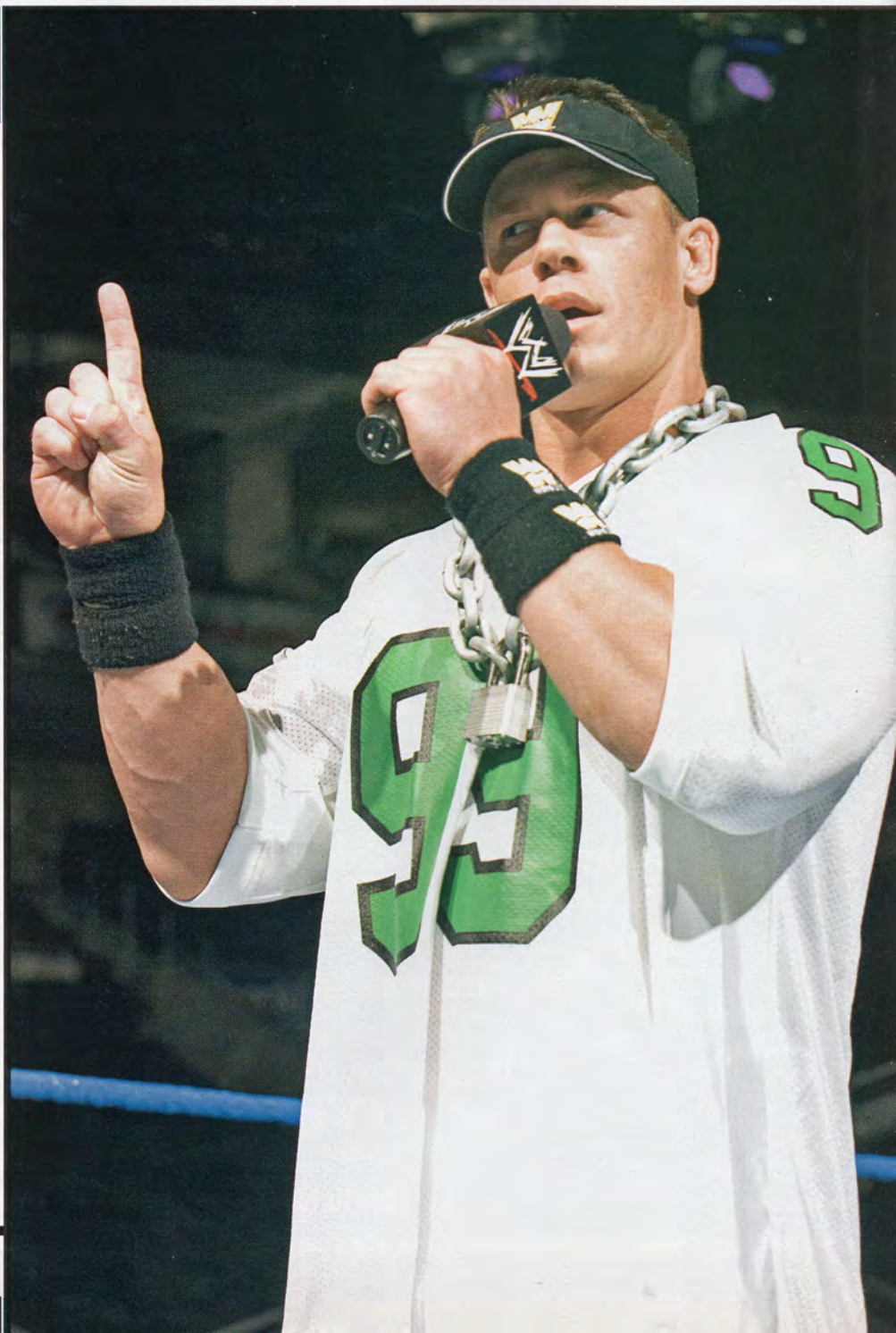
his hopes and dreams to come crumbling down in tragic fashion.

It seems that there truly is nothing in the world that can stop John Cena. What he sets his sights on, he accomplishes. Whether it's in the ring or away from it, he is always hard at work building a legacy for himself that may one day rival that of WWE's all-time greats. And although he still has a great deal left to accomplish in WWE, you can rest assured that he will not stop until each and every one

of his sports-entertainment aspirations is accomplished. He's headlined a pay-per-view. He's competed at *WrestleMania*. He's been United States Champion on two occasions. The WWE Heavyweight Championship remains his next goal.

As for the world outside WWE, with a debut CD and motion picture on the way, at this point, it's his for the taking.

You can't see him, but John Cena is everywhere. ■





Might Plus

MR. THORNY NIGHT

CIA

Flight

By Jeremy Brown

Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio Team Up to Make Waves and Make History

There are some things that, when put together, just make sense. Chocolate and peanut butter. Football and tailgating. Jimi Hendrix and a Fender Strat. Now, WWE fans have their own perfect pair with Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio, two Superstars with such a knack for high-flying maneuvers and hard-hitting finishers, it's a wonder someone didn't think of it sooner.

"I think we complement each other great," Van Dam says. "Fans tell me they think I'm amazing, performing all these acrobatic moves and that nobody can move like me. And I've always said 'What about Rey Mysterio? That guy flies all over the place!'"

In careers that have taken them from ECW to Japan to WWE, RVD & Mysterio have enjoyed incredible success as singles competitors. Van Dam is a four-time Hardcore Champion and a three-time holder of the Intercontinental title, while Rey has won the Cruiserweight title eight times.

"We were both successful on our own," Rey says. "And when you put two successful Superstars together that have been all





the way to the top, it just doubles the product."

Along the way, both have become wildly popular with fans. In arenas the world over, signs reading "619" can be spotted, while fans point at themselves with both thumbs to mimic RVD's trademark gesture. It's for these reasons both men feel that this new combination is one that will resonate with anyone who's been tracking their careers.

"We're both very popular with the fans," RVD says. "And, dare I say, we're both very cool guys! It's awesome to hear the fans give their collective appreciation for both of us when they chant 'RVD!' and '619!'"

Mysterio agrees wholeheartedly. "Once the fans see RVD & Rey Mysterio in the ring, they know they're going to get their money's worth," Mysterio says. "They know we're going to go out there and give more than 100 percent."

What makes this tag team so unique is the versatility that each Superstar brings. In addition to being a skilled technical competitor, RVD is also an accomplished martial artist, with belts in such varying disciplines as karate, aikido and kickboxing. Meanwhile, Mysterio is a veteran of *lucha libre*, with its breathtaking aerial style and almost scientific approach. When combined, the shackles truly come off.

"We have all the bases covered," RVD says. "It's like there's no limit to where we can go. And Rey & I are flying so high, we bust through the roof anyway."

Mysterio believes that by putting together two men who are so intent on breaking boundaries, it will raise the level of athleticism and entertainment every time they step into the ring.

"We can come up with moves that fans have never seen before in their lives," he says. "With our chemistry together, fans are going to get a great buffet of spectacular maneuvers that are out of this world."

It's surprising that RVD has not been paired with a partner of this type since his ECW days, when he was barnstorming through rings with Sabu.

"He was the only partner that I ever truly came to trust," Van Dam says. "We had each other's backs all over the world—Germany, Japan, all over the States."

For a time, he was paired with Booker

T, which proved to be a solid, but short-lived association. Most interestingly, he linked up with Kane in 2002, with whom he ultimately won the World Tag Team titles. Looking back, RVD still marvels at the pairing, both for its seeming incongruity and what the duo was able to do with it.

"I couldn't think of a partner more different than myself," he says. "But we still found a way to use it to our advantage."

Still, he feels that working with Rey is much more of a team effort.

"[Kane & I] were two individuals," Mr. Thursday Night says. "Rey & I feel a lot more like a team, like a well-oiled machine."

For Mysterio, working with a partner is something he has grown accustomed to. Since coming to WWE, he has worked with Edge, Tajiri and Billy Kidman, among others.

"I love tag-teaming," he says. "Not that I can't wrestle alone, but when I have a partner, I know he's got my back. When I'm in the ring, and another guy jumps me, I know he's going to step in and make the save. He's going to put his body on the line for me, and I'll do the same for him."

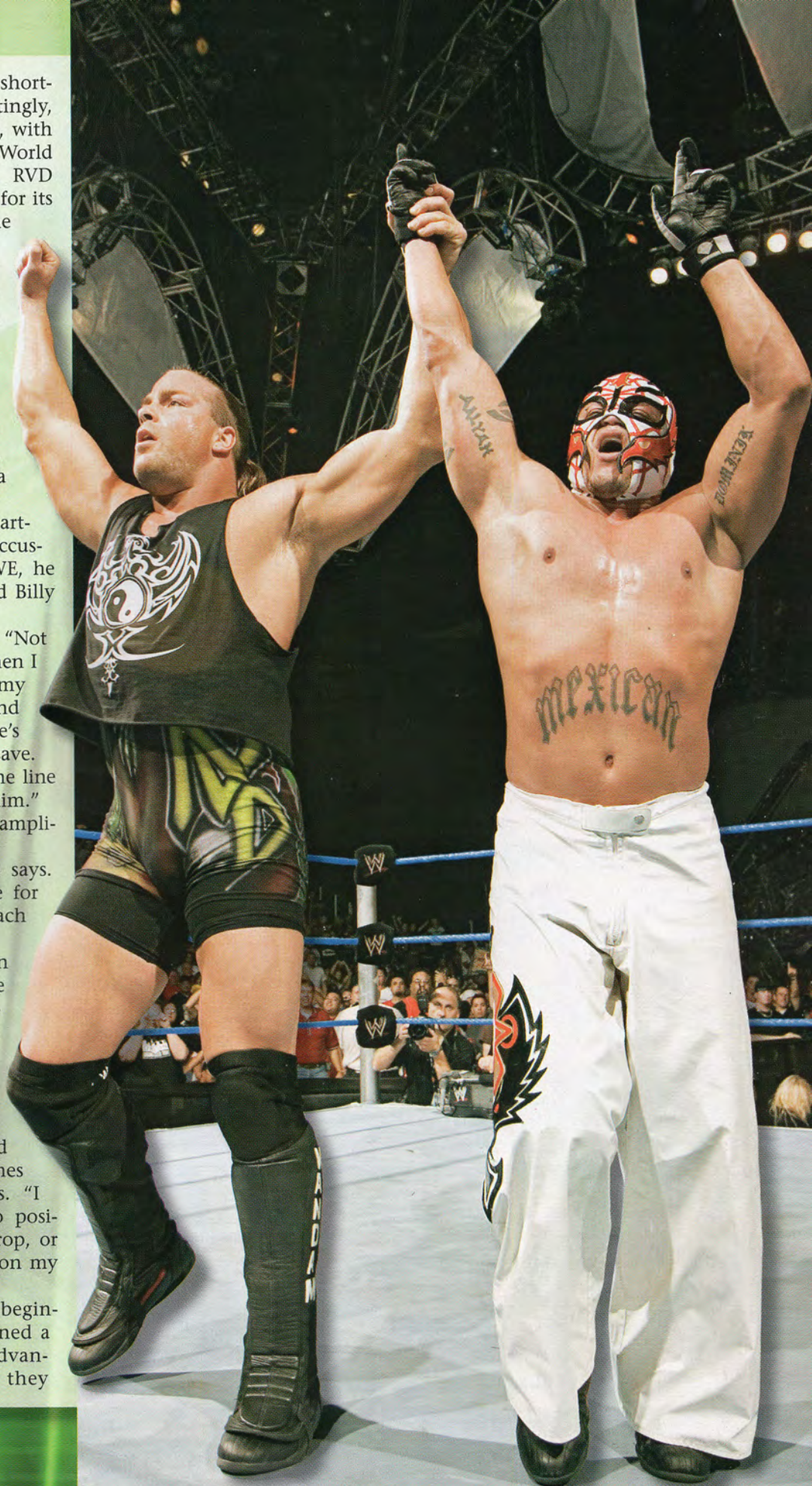
That sense of partnership is amplified when working with RVD.

"The fans aren't stupid," he says. "They know we're not in there for ourselves. We're in there for each other."

In the months they've been working together, the two have not only formed a solid partnership, but have also developed a synchronicity, using each others varied strengths and abilities to come up with exciting combinations.

"I weigh over 240 pounds, and that's an advantage when it comes to tag-team moves," RVD says. "I might want to pick Rey up to position him for a quadruple leg-drop, or I might want to throw him up on my shoulder for a chalupa roll."

With the duo's in-ring style beginning to click, they've both gained a sense of confidence in taking advantage of opportunities when they





present themselves.

"Whenever I get my opponent set up for a 619," Rey says, "I'm gonna go ahead and take it. And when I hit them with a 619, Rob can come out of nowhere, jump on the top turnbuckle and hit them with a Five-Star Frog Splash. After that, they're gone."

The partnership has also grown to the point where they are starting to coordinate what they'll wear into the ring, oftentimes calling each other on match days to prepare the evening's ring gear.

"We try to look like a team," says Rey.

And, in the true spirit of teamwork, they've also devised their own finisher: a devastating double leg-drop they call the 420. No, the number is not another area-code reference (Wisconsin, for the trivia-minded),

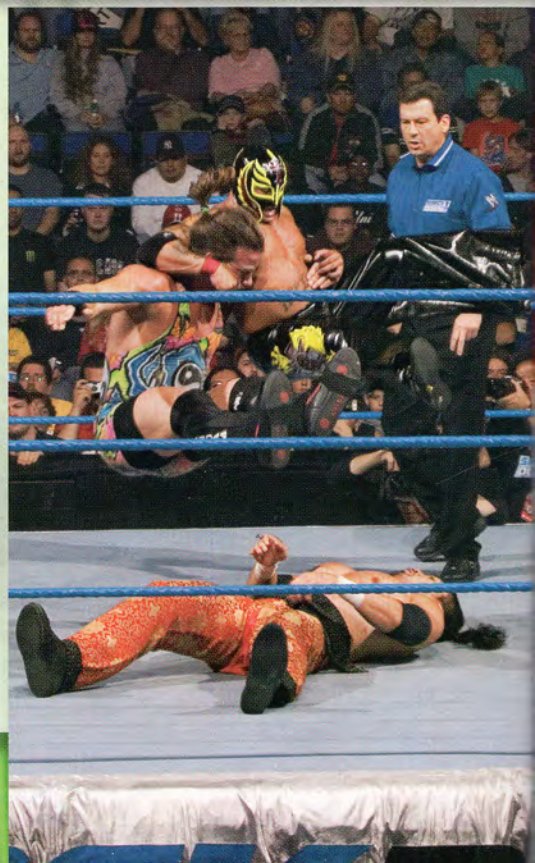
but rather stems from a more interesting combination.

"Rob's shoe size is 12, mine is eight," Mysterio says. "Twelve plus eight is 20 and it's four legs, so 420."

Wherever the future takes these two powerhouses, fans can be certain that as long as they are working as a team, the sky is truly the limit for them.

"I think it's a perfect partnership," Van Dam says. "And we're both able to adapt to each other in such a way that we're definitely going to come out on top as an outstanding tag team."

"We want people to say 'Oh man, here comes RVD & Rey, you gotta check these guys out!'" Mysterio says. "For the first-timers that have never seen us before, whoever brought them to the show can say, 'Just sit back and watch.'" ■



Eddie Guerrero™:
SmackDown!™ appearance
(3 points)

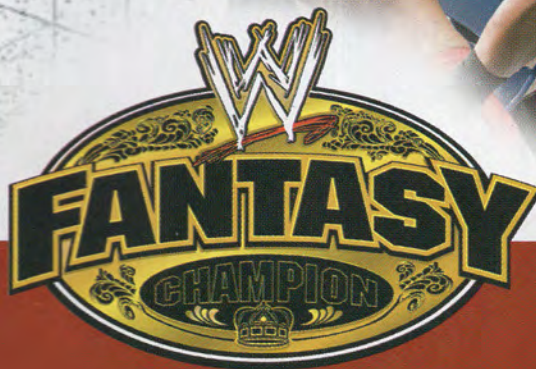
Christy:
Raw® appearance
(3 points)

Big Show®: Finishing Move
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Gene Snitsky™: Foreign object use
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The Million-

It took Daniel Puder a mere 24 hours to prove he was the right choice.

The 23-year-old California native was named the \$1,000,000 *Tough Enough* winner on the December 16 edition of *SmackDown!* from Nashville, Tennessee.

After eight grueling and sometimes nerve-racking weeks of competition, Puder was understandably eager to visit home. So, the next morning, he hopped a plane to Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was waiting for his connecting flight back to California when he decided to check his voicemail.

"I had about 12 messages," Puder says. "(WWE) wanted me in New York for some public relations stuff two days later. I thought, 'Why wait?', so I just took the next flight back East. That's what my future is going to be like, so I might as well get used to it."

Indeed, Puder, who has a mixed martial-arts and cage fighting background, will now leave behind his California marketing company to become a WWE Superstar.

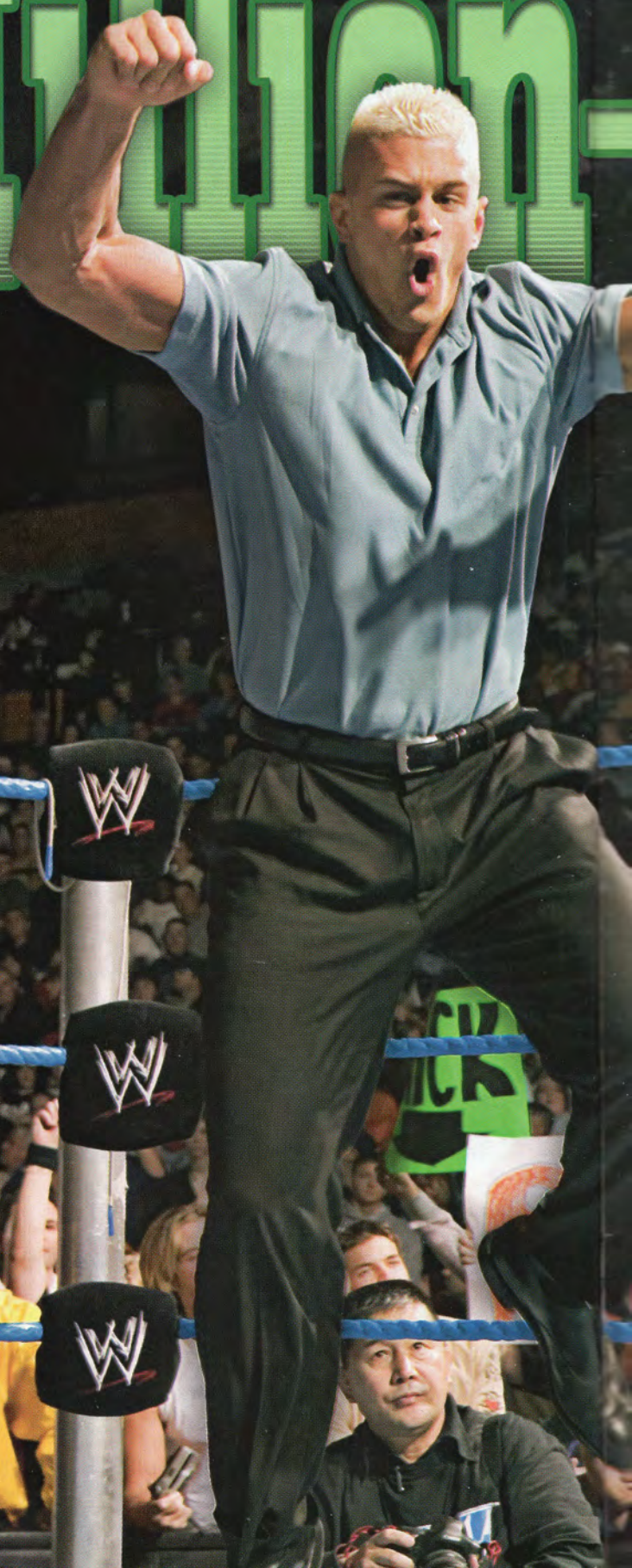
And dedication doesn't seem to be a quality Puder lacks. For instance, once he learned he was one of the eight *Tough Enough* finalists, Puder opted to live out of a Connecticut hotel just down the road from WWE's headquarters so he could take full advantage of the company's training facilities.

"If I'm going to go for a \$1,000,000 contract, why go home and take days off?," Puder says.

That work ethic paid off in a big way, as Al Snow had some bonus news for Puder in Nashville. Puder became the first Superstar to have his ticket punched for the *Royal Rumble*, in Fresno, California on January 30, live on pay-per-view.

"I'm just prepared to get my butt kicked at the *Rumble*," Puder says. "I'm getting sent on the road right away, and that's what I want. The company is spending so much time and money on me. Why not get something out of it? It's good for the company and for me."

SmackDown! Magazine recently sat down with Puder as he talked us through the eight weeks that led up to his life-changing victory.



1-Dollar Dan



Puder Wins the Tough Enough Challenge

By David Agostino

Tryouts - Venice Beach, California:
"THE FIRST CUT"

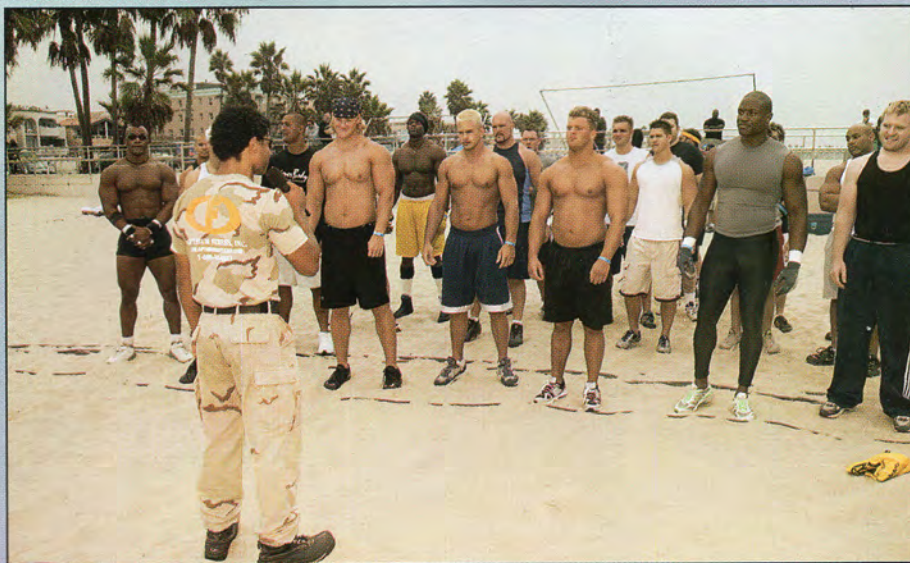
There were 50 potential finalists competing on the famous beach. Puder had the best time on the obstacle course the second day, although he struggled with his promos on the microphone.

Puder's Take: "I kept watching all these guys drop doing the course, and I didn't know what was going on. But I was prepared for it. The first and second day I cut a terrible promo, and then they asked me to pick up a girl on the beach and I did. That saved me. I knew they liked my look and athletic ability, but getting that girl to go out with me saved me."

Week 1 - Omaha, Nebraska:
"WELCOME TO THE BIG SHOW"

After John Meyer dropped out of the competition, the seven remaining finalists were given 20 seconds to call out Big Show. Each proceeded to get bodyslammed for their trouble. Puder was actually pushed into a set of lockers earlier in the night by Big Show.

Puder's Take: "Once I got pushed, that got me going. I was so pumped to get into the ring. I knew what I was going to say, but I didn't have enough time to get it out. Show is a big boy. Getting slammed by the world's biggest athlete is quite an experience."





Week 2 - St. Louis, Missouri:
"SQUAT THRUSTS"

Prior to the show, the finalists were forced to do wind sprints in the parking garage, followed by a full meal of pasta and milk. Once in the ring, they had to compete in a thrust competition. Puder finished second to Chris Nawrocki, who earned an impromptu match with Kurt Angle. That match lasted just a few seconds, as the exhausted Nawrocki was pinned easily. Angle then asked for volunteers. Of course, Puder couldn't resist. Angle would eventually pin Puder as well, although the former high school wrestling star showed flashes of potential.

Puder's Take: "I think that's what won me over with the fans the most. I also think the way I handled myself gave me respect with the guys in the back. I think that was the start of where I am today."

Week 3 - Corpus Christi, Texas:
"TORRIE WILSON SEX TEST"

The name of this challenge turned out to be quite misleading for the five remaining hopefuls. Torrie was merely the host, as the elderly Mae Young took turns kissing the competitors. Puder, decked out in a white tuxedo, was declared the winner by Young herself.

Puder's Take: "I don't care what it takes. I wore a white tuxedo and had the flowers. I was showing people my personality. I'm a nice guy. I think she picked me because of how I looked."

This was also the first week somebody was eliminated by the fans' vote, as Nick Mitchell was sent home.

Week 4 - Dayton, Ohio:
"CAPTURE THE FLAG"

Each of the five potential Superstars had to go from one corner of the ring to the other, where a yellow flag awaited them. The challenge was getting by the Basham Brothers. It turned out that none of the competitors were able to claim the flag, although Puder came the closest.

Puder's Take: "All the guys tried to go through both of (the Basham Brothers). I just went after one of them and then tried to spin off. And I got closer than anyone did in just six seconds. Then they pulled me down and choked me a little. I did all I could. It was disheartening not to get it."

Chris Nawrocki was cut prior to the challenge.





Week 5 - Rochester, New York:
"ARM WRESTLING"

It was down to the final four—Puder, Mike Mizanin, Ryan Reeves and Justice Smith. Al Snow arranged an Arm Wrestling Tournament for the weekly challenge. After Puder easily dispatched of Mizanin, he defeated the muscle-bound Reeves.

Puder's Take: "I've only lost in arm wrestling once or twice in my life. I have strong forearms, and I wasn't sure how I would do against Ryan, but I beat him."

Week 6 - Richmond, Virginia:
"DIVA SEARCH?"

Puder, Mizanin and Smith were forced to dress like women and try and pick up Hardcore Holly. The sweet-talking "Divas" didn't amuse Holly, who eventually punched Snow for arranging the whole event. Despite Puder's romantic overtures and substantial bust size, Mizanin won this challenge.

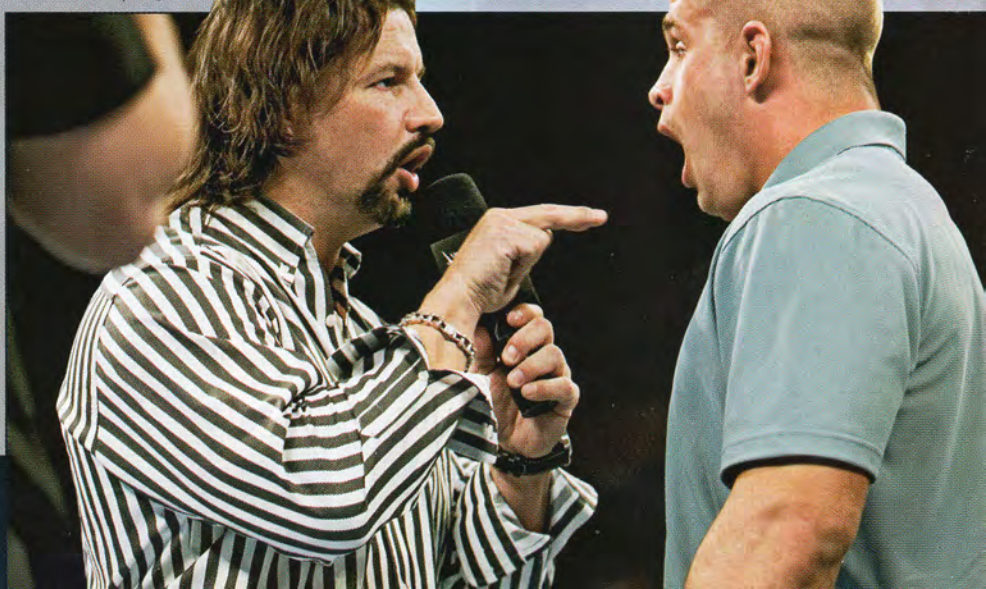
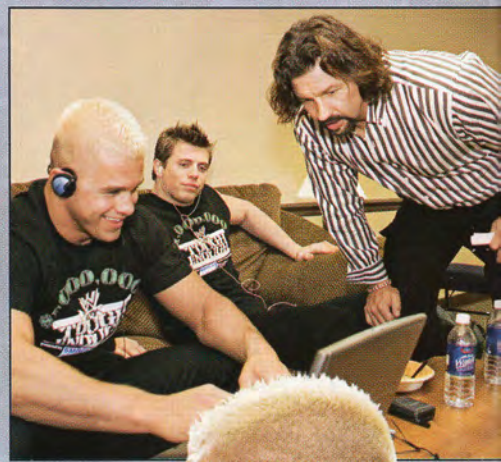
Puder's Take: "I enjoyed dressing like a girl. I was in all white, which was my thing. I also had the biggest chest."

Ryan Reeves, who was nursing bad ribs for two weeks, was sent home.

Week 7 - Greenville, South Carolina:
"JOUSTING COMPETITION"

After Justice Smith went home, it was just Puder and "The Miz." The two finalists were placed on podiums and given oversized lances for a jousting competition. Puder easily recorded two falls, knocking the MTV reality show veteran off his podium without breaking much of a sweat. The pair then engaged in a final staredown before Armageddon.

Puder's Take: "I won that thing in like 30 seconds. I was aggressive and it didn't seem like The Miz was even trying."





Week 8 - Atlanta, Georgia:

ARMAGEDDON: "DIXIE DOG FIGHT"

Puder and Mizanin traded punches for three one-minute rounds. Since nobody went down, *SmackDown!* general manager Theodore Long left it up to the crowd, who roared their approval for Puder. While Puder landed a few damaging blows, he didn't flatten "The Miz," which was his intention and many fans' expectations.

Puder's Take: "I choked a little bit at Armageddon. I really didn't perform like I usually perform. I think I took myself mentally out of it a few days earlier by putting so much pressure on myself. I know if we had two-minute rounds, I would have knocked him out."

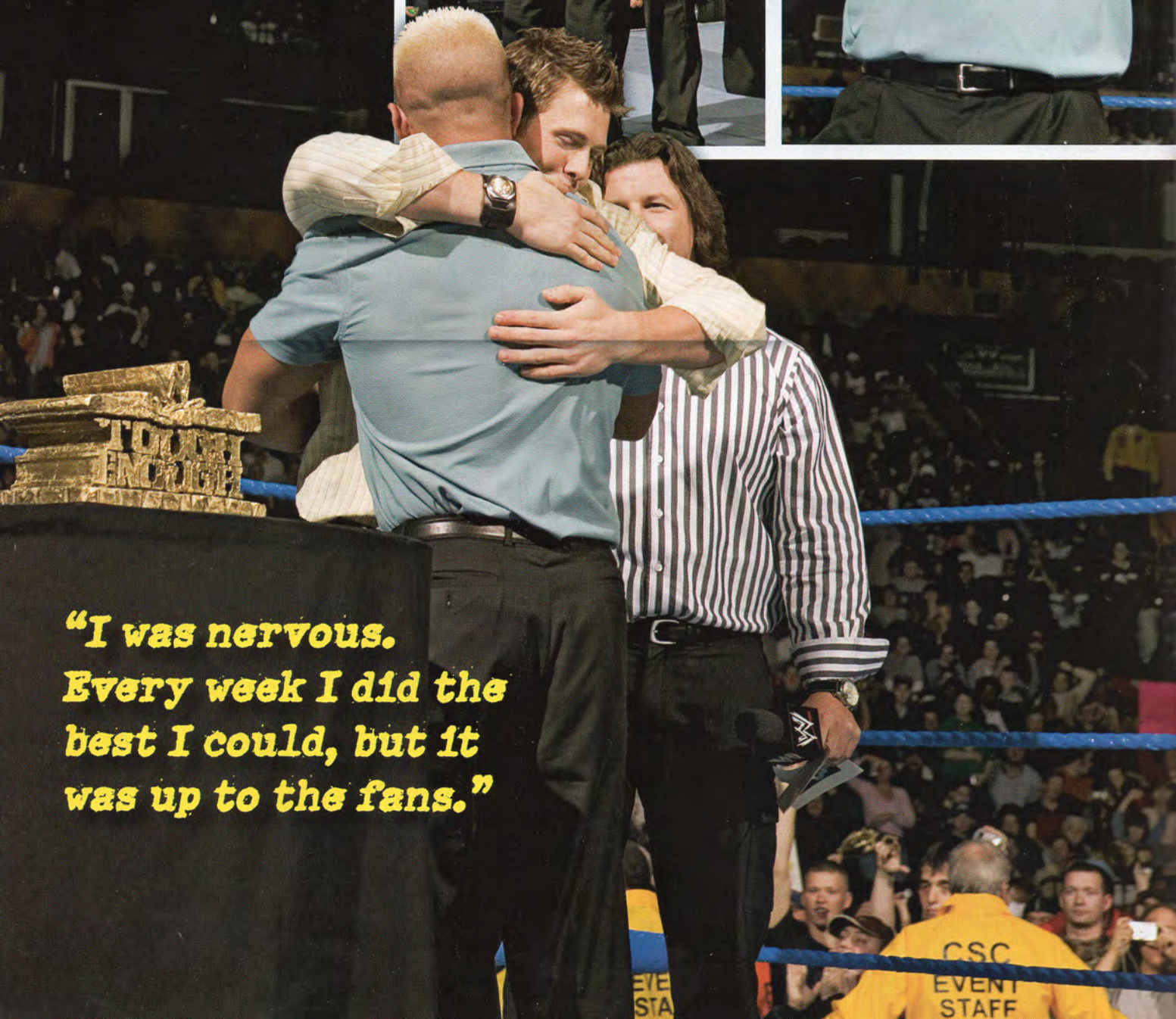
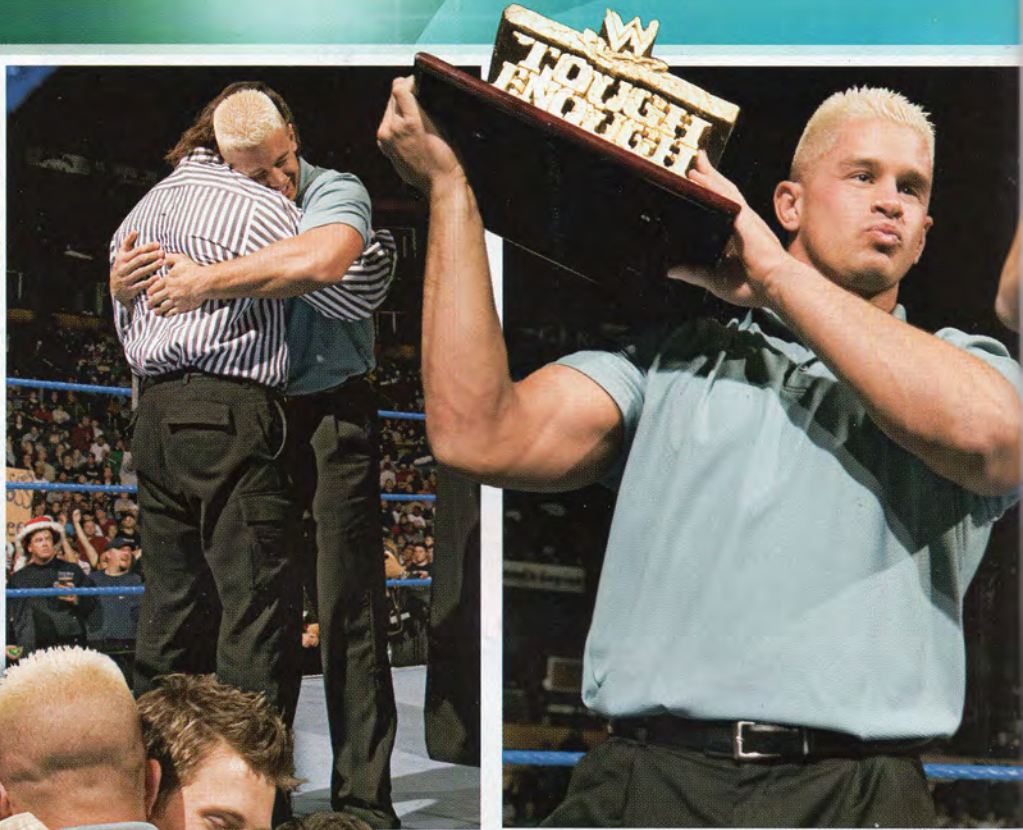


Finals - Nashville, Tennessee:
"WE HAVE A WINNER"

Unlike the previous five weeks when Snow revealed the eliminated competitor, this time the winner would be announced.

Puder's Take: "It's the one night you want to hear your name. I was nervous. I thought every week I did the best I could. I performed the best physically and I got the most cheers every week. I did everything I could, but it was up to the fans."

The future is now up to him. And Puder sounds more than prepared for the grinding lifestyle WWE Superstars must endure. ■



**"I was nervous.
Every week I did the
best I could, but it
was up to the fans."**

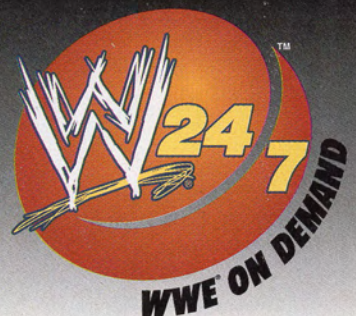
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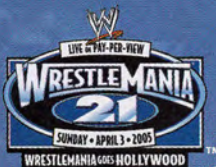
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By Ed Williams III

ARMAGEDDON

December 12, 2004
Gwinnett Center
Atlanta, GA

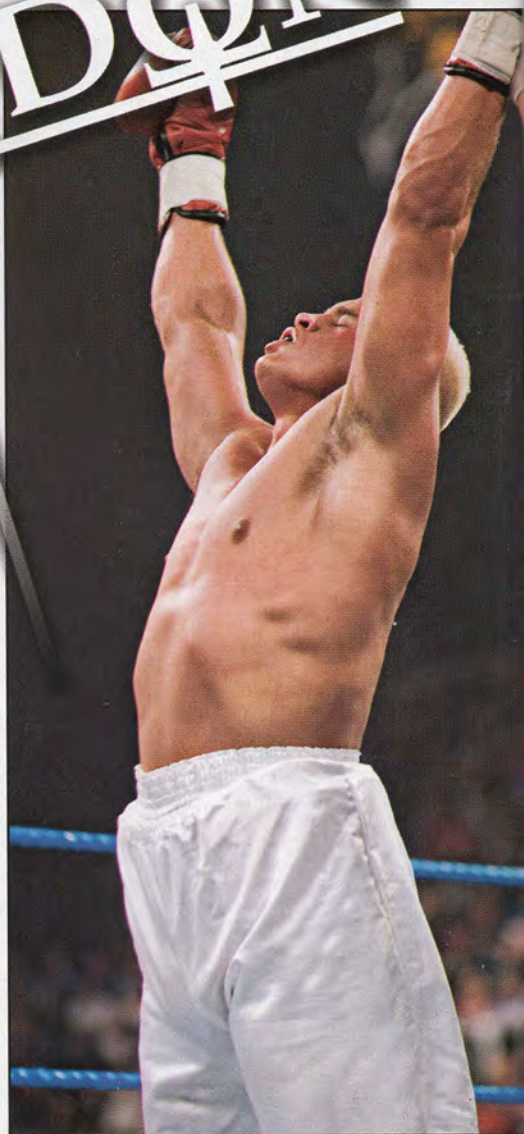
MATCH-BY-MATCH RESULTS

1. Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio successfully defended their WWE Tag Team Championship against René Duprée & Kenzo Suzuki after Van Dam hit the Five-Star Frog Splash on Duprée.
2. Kurt Angle defeated Santa Claus in the latest installment of the Angle Invitational after an Ankle Lock.
3. Daniel Puder defeated Mike Mizanin in the Dixie Dogfight, with the fans choosing the winner after three rounds of action.
4. The Basham Brothers defeated Hardcore Holly & Charlie Haas after Miss Jackie and Dawn Marie distracted Haas.
5. John Cena successfully defended the United States Championship against Jesus in a brutal Street Fight.
6. Big Show defied the odds and beat Mark Jindrak, Luther Reigns & Kurt Angle in a Handicap Match after he gave Reigns an F-5.
7. Funaki pinned Spike Dudley to become the WWE Cruiserweight Champion.
8. JBL successfully defended his WWE Championship, defeating Undertaker, Eddie Guerrero and Booker T after a Clothesline From Hell on Booker T.

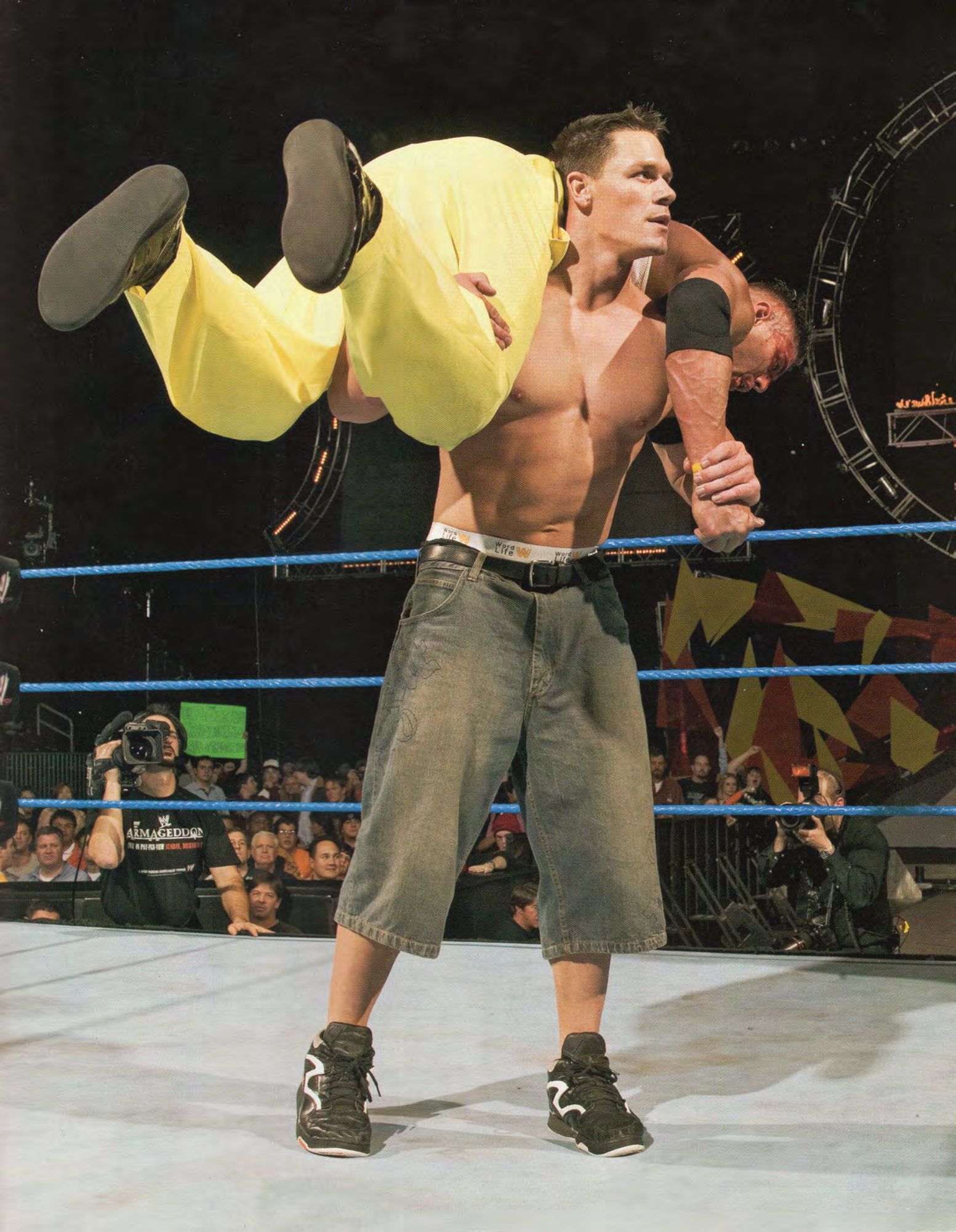
In the Fatal Four-Way Match in the main event at *Armageddon*, WWE Champion John "Bradshaw" Layfield looked like he was a fallen champion before the bell even rang. Despite words of encouragement from his Secretaries of Defense (The Bashams), his Image Consultant (Amy Weber) and his Chief of Staff (Orlando Jordan), JBL walked out to the ring, stared at his belt and clutched it like it was the last time he would ever see it. JBL was worried about the unpredictability of a Fatal Four-Way Match, but, in the end, it was that same unpredictability that helped the titlist retain his championship.

Booker T and Eddie Guerrero decided prior to the match that they would team up to take out Undertaker and JBL and then see who the better man was. Their teamwork was effective early in the match, but as time wore on, the tandem unraveled. The action soon spilled to the outside, where the champ gave Booker T a powerbomb onto the *SmackDown!* announcers' table, followed by an elbow drop through the same table. Undertaker then attacked JBL and gave him a Last Ride through the Spanish announcers' table.

With the two Superstars down, Undertaker and Guerrero resumed action in the ring. After narrowly escaping a Last Ride attempt, Eddie nailed Undertaker with the WWE



Top: Daniel Puder emerges victorious in the Dixie Dog Fight. Above: Puder connects with a left. Right: John Cena exacts bloody vengeance upon Jesus.





Championship belt. After he hit his patented Frog Splash, Guerrero bounced up, climbed the ropes and hit a second. But Undertaker miraculously kicked out after a two-count, and then sat up and flashed Guerrero an ominous stare.

Guerrero got down and dirty, giving the Deadman a low blow. He then scaled a ladder, and hit a Frog Splash from 15 feet up in the air. Just as referee Brian Hebner was about to slam his hand down for the three-count, JBL pulled him out of the ring. Undertaker soon recovered to chokeslam all three of his opponents, but before he could put JBL away, Heidenreich stormed the ring and took him out. JBL soon hit a Clothesline From Hell on Booker T to score the pinfall and retain the WWE Championship.

Armageddon was also the battleground for the next chapter in the John Cena vs. Carlito & Jesus rivalry. Cena still held the United States Championship, but after he won the title back from Carlito, Cena was viciously attacked by Jesus, re-injuring his kidney. To

Clockwise from top: RVD & Rey drop the 420 on Kenzo Suzuki; Cena and Jesus take it into the crowd; Charlie Haas dupes Dawn Marie.

add insult to injury, Jesus stole back Cena's chain and had been wearing it ever since, mocking the champion. Since this rivalry had gotten so personal, a Street Fight was signed by *SmackDown!* general manager Theodore Long.





MATCH Jukebox



Undertaker and Paul Bearer



D-Von Dudley vs. Rob Van Dam



Hollywood Hogan
vs. Earthquake

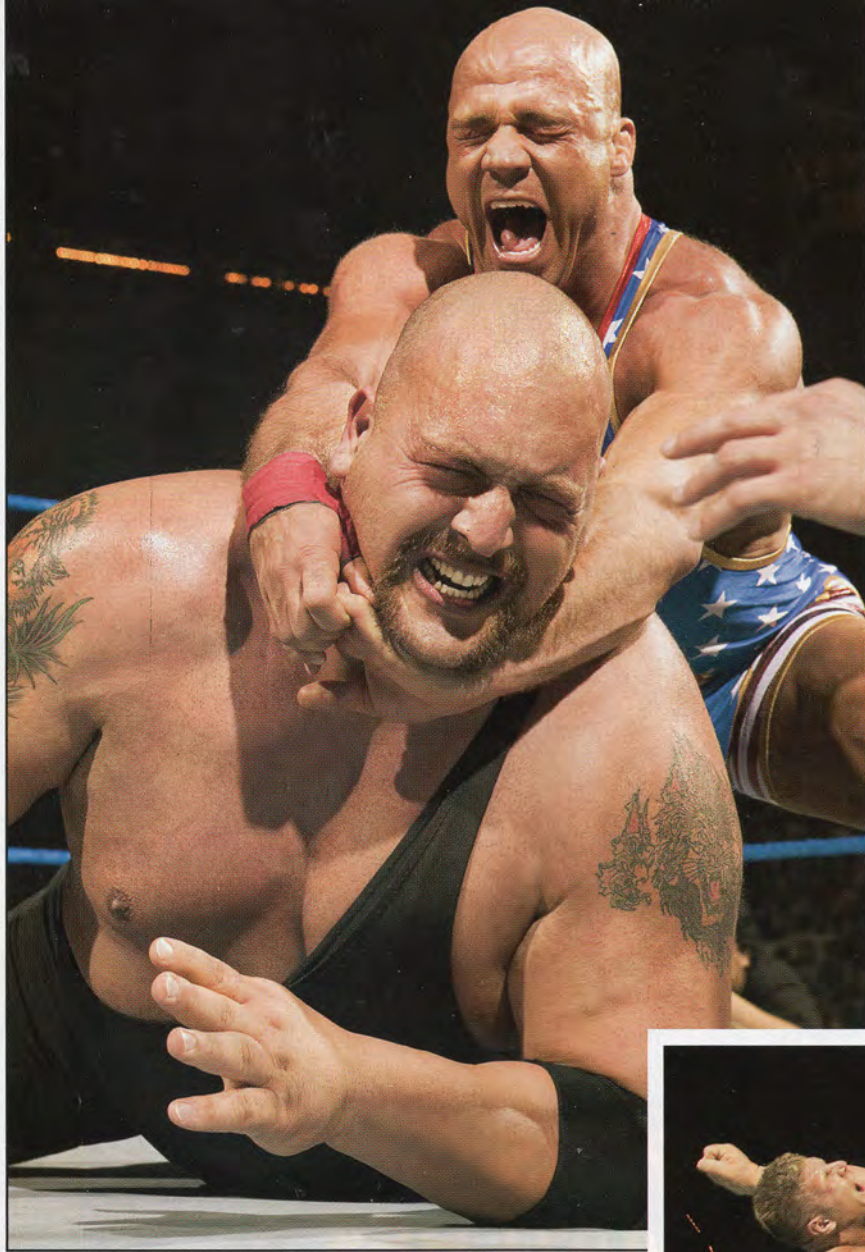
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Cena came to the ring sporting a brand-new United States Championship belt. The center medallion of the belt was redesigned as a turntable, and Cena showed it off by spinning it for all to see. Jesus tried to gain the upper hand early when he hit Cena in his injured kidneys with a kendo stick, but that only enraged the champion. The Doctor of Thuganomics completely dominated the action, splintering the kendo stick during his assault on Jesus. The two Superstars brought the fight into the crowd as well, as Cena methodically destroyed his opponent.

With Jesus busted open, the action returned back to the ring, but the change in scenery didn't help the challenger. Cena hit Jesus over the head with a trash-can lid and a metal street sign before delivering the FU for the win. Before leaving, the champion reclaimed his stolen chain and lock.

The Gwinnett Center was also the setting for the final competition in the \$1,000,000 *Tough Enough* contest. Daniel Puder and Mike Mizanin were able to outlast thou-

sands of other participants to square off in a Dixie Dogfight, which consisted of three one-minute rounds of boxing. The action started off fast and furious as both competitors came out swinging. Mizanin, a clear underdog in the match, shocked the crowd as he hit a couple of flurries to take the first round, according to the unofficial scoring of *SmackDown!* announcers Michael Cole and Tazz and special guest announcer Al Snow.

While Mizanin seemed to tire after the early flurry, Puder remained solid throughout, with his punishing right hand rocking Mizanin on a few occasions. No knockdowns were recorded, so the decision rested in the hands of the fans. Although it was close, Puder was declared the winner.

Big Show is obviously the biggest Superstar in WWE, so it was only fitting that he had the biggest challenge at *Armageddon*. After being embarrassed by Kurt Angle, Luther Reigns and Mark Jindrak over the last few months, Big Show wanted to settle the score once and for all. Instead of going through the trio one-by-one, Big Show challenged them all to a Handicap Match.

Kurt Angle temporarily got the better of Big Show (left), but the awesome might of the 7-foot, 470-pound monster eventually won out over Angle and his cohorts (below).



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Above: Funaki puts Spike down for the count in the match of his life. Right: JBL lands a three-count against Booker T to walk out of the Fatal Four-Way Match with his WWE Championship intact.

Before the bout, Big Show was treated to a good-luck kiss from Joy Giovanni, which gave him plenty of motivation. Still, the numbers seemed too overwhelming for him in the early going as Reigns, Jindrak and Angle took turns punishing their adversary. But Big Show would soon get a second wind as he threw out Jindrak and Angle, and was able to nail a massive F-5 on Reigns for the impressive victory.

It wasn't a completely wasted night for Angle, though, as he did pick up another win in the Angle Invitational. Earlier in the evening, Angle proclaimed that he would be facing someone that, like himself, takes his craft very seriously and is very good at what he does: Santa Claus. Upset that all his daughter talks about is Santa, Angle took out his frustrations on Kris Kringle and made

him tap out to the Ankle Lock.

The night was also one to remember for *SmackDown!*'s No. 1 announcer, Funaki. After winning a Cruiserweight Battle Royal earlier in the week on *SmackDown!*, Funaki earned a shot at Spike Dudley's Cruiserweight Championship.

After getting near-falls from delivering a bulldog, *enziguri* and a top rope cross-body block, Funaki reversed a roll-up and pinned the leader of the Dudleys for the first championship of his seven-year WWE career. An elated Funaki couldn't contain his emotions as he hugged and celebrated with the *Armageddon* announcers.

An unscheduled match also took place, pitting JBL's Secretaries of Defense (the Bashams) against Hardcore Holly & Charlie Haas.

During the match, Haas took a nasty spill to the outside, which prompted Dawn Marie to come down to check on the man with whom she'd claimed to be having an affair. Miss Jackie then



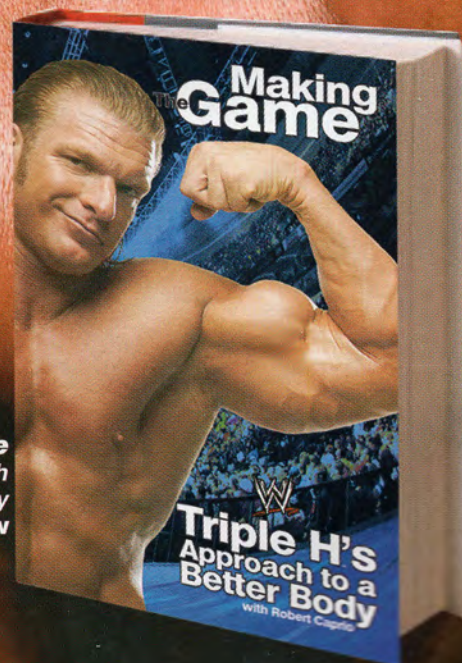


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stormed the ring, upset that Dawn Marie was again moving in on her fiancé. The incident distracted Haas, who was not on the apron when Holly went to tag him, allowing the Bashams to pick up the win.

Later on in the evening, Miss Jackie faced Dawn Marie, with Haas as the special guest referee. After a brief catfight, Dawn Marie reversed a roll-up and grabbed a handful of tights to score the pinfall.

After the match, Haas admitted that he was having an affair, and then got down on one knee before Dawn Marie. But instead of proposing to her, Haas shocked everyone, saying that he didn't want to be with either of them.

But the match that really set the tone for the exciting

Eddie executed a perfect Frog Splash on 'Taker (left), but it was Heidenreich who took the Dead Man out of the match (below).

night was the WWE Tag Team Championship bout which pit the champions, Rob Van Dam & Rey Mysterio, against René Duprée and Kenzo Suzuki.

The distraction of Hiroko was eliminated early on as Torrie Wilson chased her away from ring-side, evening up the two sides. Duprée and Suzuki, who had just lost the titles three nights prior, had the early advantage as they cut off the ring and utilized quick tags to dominate Mysterio.

After three near-tags to Van Dam, Mysterio connected on a second-rope hurricanrana that sent Duprée shoulder-first into the steel ring post. Mysterio was able to make the tag to Van Dam as the tide began to shift.

Van Dam and Mysterio hit several of their innovative tag-team maneuvers such as the 420 and the Chalupa Roll before Mysterio cleared the ring of Suzuki. Van Dam scaled the top rope for the Five-Star Frog Splash and got the pin to retain the titles. ■





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From 'Mr. Monday Night' to *SmackDown!* Superstar, this 2-disc set highlights RVD's huge impact on the world of sports-entertainment.

A Five-Star Production

By Evan Denbaum

The new retrospective, *Rob Van Dam: One of a Kind*, chronicles each stage of Van Dam's illustrious career—from early persona Robby V in WCW, to being known as "The Whole F'n Show" in ECW, and then his impact on WWE. Perhaps the greatest strength of this compilation is in the impeccable selection of matches—shown in their entirety—that embody specific times in Van Dam's career. And while those matches are introduced and analyzed by RVD, it's his actions in the ring that speak louder than any words ever could.

It's wild to see a young Van Dam in an Underdog Challenge in WCW. His trademark flexibility, acrobatics and mixed martial-arts skills are there from the very start.

It's heart-pounding to relive the violent, extreme conditions Van Dam endures while headlining ECW. He matches the dangerous and death-defying Sabu move-for-move, while raising the bar in counterpunching contests against Jerry Lynn.

It's intriguing to see how Van Dam adapts his style to succeed in WWE. Different ring dimensions, a busier schedule and increased exposure all

demand that the Superstar make changes mid-stream.

Importantly, RVD brings an independent voice when discussing the differences in styles and philosophy between WCW, ECW and WWE—and how those changes have influenced his career and the public's perceptions of him. One of the most fascinating moments of the feature disc is the one in which Van Dam explains how he can always tell the difference between an RVD fan from the ECW days and one from recent times simply from their in-ring expectations.

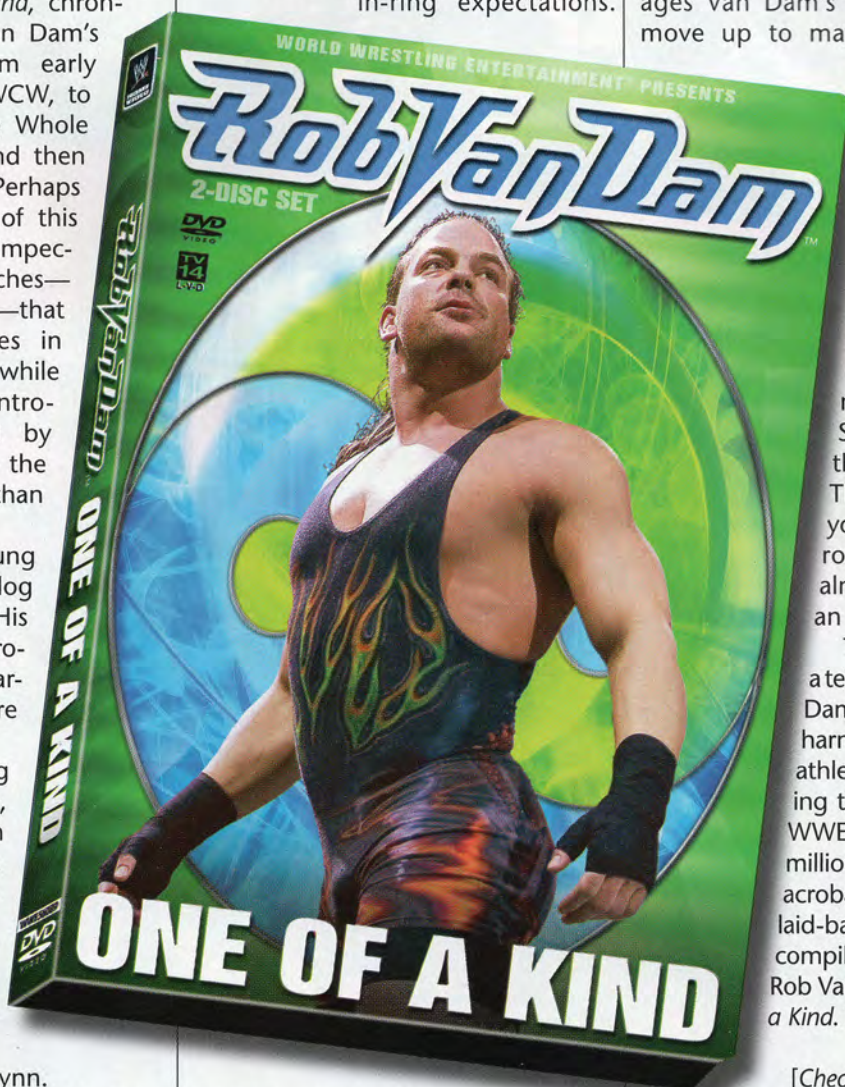
model to far more fans.

Rob Van Dam: One of a Kind brings great humanity to what might otherwise seem like a ruthless ECW bloodletting. Even though RVD and Jerry Lynn were continuously tearing each other to shreds during their famous rivalry, they were thriving off each other's intensity and preparedness. The results were lightning-paced battles with jaw-dropping exchanges. The DVD also takes you inside the mind of ECW owner Paul Heyman, who masterfully leverages Van Dam's eventual desire to move up to major Monday night television, turning

it into a publicity-generating machine that benefits RVD and ECW alike.

In addition, *Rob Van Dam: One of a Kind* explains the origins of Van Dam's most famous maneuvers: the Five-Star Frog Splash and the Van Terminator. The DVD also takes you through the harrowing match that almost cost Van Dam an eye.

The DVD set provides a telling glimpse into Van Dam's long journey into harnessing his wondrous athletic gifts and polishing them to produce the WWE Superstar that thrills millions today. From his acrobatic wizardry to his laid-back personality, this compilation bears out that Rob Van Dam is truly *One of a Kind*. ■



RVD enjoys the vast range and knowledge of his fan base. Thanks to WWE, Van Dam says, he's a bigger star who can be a positive role

[Check out WWEShop.com for more information on how you can order your copy of *Rob Van Dam: One of a Kind*, as well as all the other great WWE titles.]



"Nature Boy" Buddy Rogers tends to his protege, Superfly Jimmy Snuka, after Snuka's infamous attack at the hands of "The Crippler" Ray Stevens in 1982. After Rogers convinced the Superfly to fire Capt. Lou Albano as his manager, Albano ordered Stevens to piledrive Snuka onto a concrete floor. The resulting rivalry would turn Snuka into WWE's most popular Superstar.

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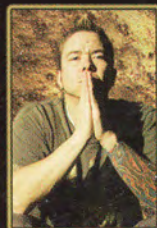
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